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A FARTHER
D E F E N C E
OF THE
M E T H O D I S T S ;
IN
FIVE LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE
R E V. W. RUSSEL,
Curate of Perfhore ;
IN ANSWER TO HIS HINTS
TO THE
METHODISTS and DISSENTERS.

By JOSEPH BENSON. R

THE SECOND EDITION.

*Truth is great and will prevail. APOC.
If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,
whether it be of God. JOHN vii. 17.
Study to shew thyself approved unto God :—but shun profane
and vain babblings : for they will increase unto more un-
godliness. 2 TIM. ii. 15, 16.*

L O N D O N :

Printed by G. PARAMORE, North-Green, Watling-Street :
Sold by C. WHITEFIELD, at the Chapel, City-Road ; and at
the Methodist Preaching-Houses in town and Country. 1794.
[Price EIGHT-PENCE.]

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS many of my Friends wonder that I would take any notice of Mr. *Russel's Hints*; I think proper to observe here, that although his *Remarks* may not deserve notice, yet the truths contained in the following pages, especially in the 2d, 3d, and 4th Letters, deserve to be known: and it is a conviction of their importance to the further progress of pure and genuine Christianity, that induces me to take this occasion of laying them before the Public. If the Reader have patience to go through the *first* Letter, which, though upon matters of lesser moment, I was under a necessity of writing to clear the way for what follows, I hope he will find satisfaction in the remaining part of the Book, and will not think his labour lost in attentively perusing it.



JOSEPH BENSON.

REV. SIR,

That I have truth on my side, I have no doubt. The careful perusal of your *Hints*, has not caused me to alter my sentiments in any one instance. Nor would I have taken the least notice of them had it not been for two reasons.

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fore the public, and of discussing more at large two or three points, of no small moment, which in the former publication, I could but just mention; and lest another occasion of doing this should not soon occur, I think it best to embrace the present. For these reasons, Sir, I again take up my pen, and shall make it my business to let nothing in your *Hints* pass without notice, that appears to me, in any respect, to merit it. But I have too much regard for the public, and for the proper use of my own time, to reply to every thing you have thought proper to advance in your shilling Pamphlet, "the hasty composition" (as you tell us p. 47) "of a few days."

Indeed with regard to *brevity*, you yourself have facilitated my work not a little. "Within the first fourteen pages of your Defence (you say p. 6.) there is little that I can object to, your reasoning is cogent and well founded, for it is built on the Rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ the righteous, and therefore it will stand." Now in the truths contained in these pages, as any attentive and judicious reader will easily observe, the foundation is laid of all that is afterward advanced, so that if these stand, I have no reason to fear the superstructure that is raised thereon falling. Add to this, that those parts of my Letters to which you object are but few, and of the rest you declare yourself, p. 43, to be "a warm admirer, and sincerely wish, you say, that a similar affection to what (you think) I feel for the divine Immanuel, who shed his blood for our sins on Calvary, was universally felt by the Priests and people of this land, and through the whole Christian world." These things being considered it should seem the difference cannot be very great between us, and that a few pages would settle it, especially as you promise p. 21. that your objections

tions " shall be stated in a spirit of Christian love : " and in a spirit of Christian love I hope to consider and reply to them.

In this spirit, indeed, I trusted I had stated and laid before the public my objections to divers particulars contained in Doctor Tatham's Sermon ; but from *this spirit* you think I have *departed* in the 30th page of my publication, and this is your first objection. Your words are, " If giving the lie (as p. 30.) be inconsistent with Christian meekness, why, then most certainly you have deviated from those professions you made in the very outset of your Remarks." I am glad, Sir, that even *you* have found no reason to accuse me of such a deviation, till I have advanced as far as the 30th page, and that this, it seems, is the only instance, you can produce, in the whole book ; especially considering that you *yourself* are not sure (you say) that such expressions, as I have there used, " are wholly inconsistent with such a temper, since, even the " meek Jesus used that style, with many other " terms of severe reprobation respecting the Jews, " John viii. 55." I thank you, Sir, for the excuse you make for me. But I am not inclined to avail myself of it. In matters of this kind I do not wish to plead the example of Jesus. He as *Son of the Father* and *Lord of the Universe*, might use language to his servants, which those servants have no right to use one towards another. Because he there terms the Jews *liars*, it does not follow that *we* have a right to give our fellow-creatures similar appellations : even as from his calling the Pharisees *fools* and *blind*, and from his terming Herod a *Fox*, we must not think ourselves justified in saying to our brother, *Thou fool*, or in giving the name of *Fox* to the Ruler of the people.

A 3.

But

But have I, indeed, used the same language towards Dr. T—, which our Lord used towards the Jews? Have I, in plain words, called him a *liar*? Certainly I have not. I am not sure to what sentence in that page you refer; but I suppose it is to the following. “ You cannot sincerely *think*, (I say to the Doctor) that all the Methodists, Anabaptists, and Dissenters of every kind answer this description;” viz. the description the Doctor had given of them, as being “ self-taught without power, and self-ordained “ without even the appearance of learning, men “ out of the meanest professions and lowest occupations of life, whom had their hearers a “ fair opportunity of trying, they would find “ more ignorant and unqualified than themselves, “ blind leaders of the blind.” “ But /I proceed) no doubt you wish they did answer it; and I fear you wish, too, to make the nation believe it, to make them believe what a person of much less information than you cannot but know to be a *lie*.” Now, Sir, I acknowledge this sentence is *severe*, but not more so, I think, than the subject demanded. Such illiberal treatment of so many numerous and respectable bodies of people, as the Dissenters of all kinds and *Methodists* are, is *insufferable* and deserves the severest animadversion. The Doctor could not but know that, taking them in general, they were not the persons he described, and therefore was inexcusable in representing them to the public in that light, especially considering the very critical state of the nation at that time, and the consequences which, there was every reason to apprehend, would follow, and which, in fact, did follow, upon his charges being repeated in so many churches, and published and spread with such great assiduity through the nation. I speak
respecting

respecting the *Mobs* that rose in Oxford and other places against the Methodists, not only to the destruction of their *property* but the great hazard of their *lives*.

But let me observe, Sir, if you have a right, from what I have advanced in that page, to say I gave Dr. T——, the lie, it is probable, before I have done, I shall give you equal ground of complaint, respecting my treatment of yourself, and then I may have reason to dread the consequence; for “had you used (you say) such language to me, personally, most probably “neither your sanctity nor even your age would “have prevented you from receiving, what your “behaviour would so justly merit,—a *knock-down* “*argument*, not from my tongue, but from an “instrument which, perhaps, would make a “more sensible impression of its weight and “power.” I presume you mean your *fiat*, a *bludgeon*, or a *pistol*. I fear, Sir, you are beginning already, although only in the 2d page of your work, to depart from that spirit of meekness and love in which you promised to state your objections, and that in a *manner* and *degree* in which the example of Christ cannot be pleaded in your justification. For although he termed the Jews *liars*, he never knocked any of them down. And I fear too, that you are, (to use the Apostle’s expression, Tit. i. 7.) *soon angry*, and that it is not an unusual thing with you to come upon those that affront you with these “knock down arguments.” It is well for me that I happen to be situated at such a distance from you, otherwise I might well write this *reply* to your *Hints* with fear and trembling.

It was very unfortunate that you should fall into this mistake at your very entrance on your work, and at the very time when you were about

to entreat us "not to despise your youth." For my part, Sir, although you were an entire stranger to me, and I never heard your name mentioned before I saw it on the *Title-page* of your book; yet as you were a *Minister* of the *established church*, and a person who had been at the pains, not only carefully to *peruse*, but even to favour me with your Remarks on my Letters, I felt my mind much disposed to respect you, and to represent you to the public in a favourable point of view. Indeed, Sir, it is natural for us to wish our opponents to be viewed by the world as persons worthy of respect; for should we have the advantage over them in the field of controversy, the more eminent they are, the greater will be the reputation we gain by the conquest; or if we be worsted, it is surely more to our credit to be foiled by *wise men* than by *fools*. It was therefore my interest to have you regarded as a person of character, and it is quite unpleasing to see you debasing yourself in this manner, in the very 2d page of your work. Some of your readers will doubtless infer, from what you have said, that you are, what St. Paul calls, a *Striker*, and therefore unfit for the Pastoral Office, while your advice to us "not to despise your youth," becomes to all more difficult to be taken. For as Cowper justly observes, speaking of the Clergy,

- "We venerate the man whose heart is warm.
- "Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
- "Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
- "That he is honest in the sacred cause.
- "To such we render more than mere respect,
- "*Whose actions say that they respect themselves.*"

Indeed

Indeed this is the meaning of the Apostle's exhortation to Timothy in the passage to which you refer, 1 Epistle iv. 12. He means "so conduct thyself that no man may have any *cause* to despise thee for thy youth," for he adds, *but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity (that is love) in spirit, in faith, in purity.* Ita vive, *so live* (says Grotius) ita te gere, *so conduct thyself* (says Piscator,) ne merito contemni possis, *that thou may not be deservedly despised.* What is wanting in thy age make up, (says Erasmus and Sculetus) *by the gravity of thy behaviour, the innocence of thy life, and the excellence of thy doctrine.* I am sorry, Sir, you should thus overlook the obvious meaning of the Text, for had you attended to it, as you seem very desirous your readers should *not despise your youth*, and thereby detract from the weight of your arguments, you doubtless would have been more careful so to conduct yourself, in this controversy, as to give them no cause to despise it. The above is not the only instance, in which you degrade yourself in the eyes of your readers. The representation you give of yourself, p. 5. with "the spruce head of a modern young Cleric," lessens you also not a little. What you may precisely mean by this singular phraseology, I am not sure. But the moment I read it, it brought to my mind the above mentioned Poet's description of a modern young Clergyman, whom he represents, how justly we have daily evidence, as

—"Loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse,
Frequent in park, with Lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,

But

But rare at home, and never at his Books,
 Or with his Pen, save when he scrawls a card :
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round
 Of Ladyships, a stranger to the poor,
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
 And well prepar'd, by ignorance and sloth,
 By infidelity and love of world,
 To make God's work a Sinecure ; a slave
 To his own pleasure and his Patron's pride."

This description, however cannot suit *you*. You undoubtedly are sometimes at your books, and that you can and do use your pen for other purposes than writing Cards to Ladies, this your present publication is a full proof. Therefore, I must caution those of our readers, who do not know you, against conceiving the idea of your bearing any resemblance to the *beaus*, whom the Poet describes. And as I find it would give me an *unfair* advantage over you, an advantage I do not wish, I must, before we proceed any further, beg leave to *put off* those "sapient locks of a full Cauliflower Perriwig," with which you have kindly and respectfully adorned me, and for your comfort, must assure you that, though I have been upwards of twenty years in the Ministry, my head is neither hoary with age, nor am I a person of that venerable appearance your imagination has painted me to be. If I prevail against you, as I certainly hope to do, the victory must be ascribed, to *truth*, and *argument*, and not to a *hoary head*, or a *Perriwig*.

I presume, Sir, if you had known these things beforehand, you would not have been in such great perplexity, as we find you in the 4th page, "to consider whether it would be most proper to affix your name to your reply, or to conceal it." The reason of this perplexity you give us. "If

" the

" the world, you say, were to know that it was
 " written by a young man in obscurity, it might
 " have less weight with them, or the motives of his
 " conduct may be more censured, than if he pub-
 " lished under anonymous secrecy." The world,
 Sir, I dare say, will allow your reply all the *weight*
 it has, and as to the *motives* of your conduct, I
 hardly think they would have been much sus-
 pected, had you not, in one of your Notes, giv-
 en an hint of your desire for preferment. And,
 I think, those that have it in their power, and
 wish well to the Church, should give you a *Living*;
 were it only for your *kind intentions*, and the
 encouragement of such as may hereafter be dis-
 posed to engage in the same service, for you un-
 doubtedly meant, amidst all your infirmities, to
 serve *her* as well as *yourself*. And if you have
 failed of your purpose, your *head* and not your
heart is in the fault. In a matter of this kind they
 might take the *will* for the *deed*.

But to return : For the above-mentioned rea-
 sons, after we have read on the Title-page, *A few*
Hints for the consideration of Methodists and other
Dissenters, by William Russel, Curate of Pershore,
 we are given to understand page 4, that this same
William Russel has determined to conceal his
 name ! When, in perusing your Pamphlet, I
 came to this paragraph, I was put to a full stop,
 and had I not learnt from a friend just come from
 Worcestershire, that there certainly was such a
 place as *Pershore*, and such a person as *William*
Russel, who was Curate there, I should have con-
 cluded that the name of the *person*, at least, was
 fictitious, and that the real Author of the Publi-
 cation lay concealed.

It is true, in a Note, which we find at the end
 of your book, we learn that, although you had
 at first really " intended to conceal yourself under
 the

the signature of a *Minister of the Church of England*, yet you afterwards altered your intention in consequence of the remonstrance of a friend, who urged that as you had thought proper "to make a personal attack upon an individual, as well as to censure a collective body, it would be acting cowardly not to avow your name and residence." But is it not amazing that you had not the prudence to keep all this to yourself? and after, you had determined, contrary to your first resolution, not to turn out this your *first begotten child* into the wide world "in an orphan-like character," as you express it, *forlorn* and *unprotected*, but to affix your name to the Title-page, that you did not strike out the above-mentioned paragraph? But I suppose, as you had written it, and it was now become one of the Members of your own beloved child, you could not find in your heart to suffer an amputation of what seemed a part of the whole, although now superfluous, and rather an *excrescence* than a *member*; but resolved, should the Press labour ever so much at the unnatural birth, and mankind be shocked ever so greatly at the monstrous production, to send it abroad in the very state in which it first shewed itself under the forming hand of its *genuine father* and *creator*.

But I will not bear too hard upon you, especially as you are young in years, and "this is the first time you have ventured to declare yourself an Author, &c." and, in the judgment of most of your readers, I believe, *quite soon enough*. Nor will I entirely disappoint the hope and trust, you so seriously express, that your *Hints*, once in danger of being disowned, but at last happily filiated, shall be candidly considered and favourably treated. Nevertheless I think what you observe, and what will readily be allowed, as to their

their "not being the result of deep and long continued meditation, but the hasty composition of a few days," will not weigh much, with the more judicious of your readers, to procure from them the "favourable opinion" you solicit. A young man, of little reading and little knowledge, whose judgment is not yet matured, should not be forward to give to the world "the hasty composition of a few days." It would better become him to follow the direction of the judicious heathen in this case, to whose advice if you had attended, you would have spared me the labour of most, if not all of these remarks, and yourself, perhaps, some mortification and pain of mind.

Si quid tamen olim
Scripseris, in Messî descendat iudicis aures;
— nonum prematur in annum,
Membranis intus positis, delere licebit
Quod non edideris. Nescit vox missa reverti.

There are many other inconsistencies in your remarks which could only have proceeded from your *want of attention*, and *great haste to appear in public*, as an *Author*. For instance, you tell me abruptly, in your first remark, where you charge me with giving Dr. T——, the *lie*, and departing from my profession of Christian meekness,—that I have run counter to the maxims of worldly politeness and a precept of courtesy enjoined by St. Peter, and that if I had made use of such language to you in person, most probably you would have knocked me down: that "the expression was illiberal, and when written and sent to the press certainly implied no small share of rancour." And then you immediately say, that "personal invective is not your object: that "you have not authority for using such language,

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"having

"having never heard my name mentioned but once, and then in terms of the highest respect," and that now having read my Pamphlet you "have not the least reason to think the representation of my character a false one;" in short that your "veneration for me is increased, and that you even wish to be, (to use your own phraseology) if not altogether as I am, yet in a great measure partaking of my likeness, both in "learning and piety." Now, Sir, what am I to think of this? How happens it that you thus send forth *bitter* water and *sweet*, at one and the same time, from one and the same fountain? Had you made use of the one kind of language in the beginning, and of the other towards the conclusion of your Pamphlet, or had a few pages intervened, it would have been less wonderful, but that you should thus blow *hot* and *cold* at one *breath*, is indeed astonishing.

Again (p. 15.) you assure us that what I have advanced is, "such trash and falsehood," that you can easily refute it by the help of your natural faculties without the aid of divine illumination. And yet it seems the reading of this "trash and falsehood," greatly increased your veneration for its Author! This, Sir, is but a small specimen of the numberless inconsistencies that present themselves in your Letters; inconsistencies which lay very great obstacles, in the way of those, that may be disposed to comply with your earnest request, and "not to despise your youth." But to drop this, and come to matters of more serious discussion.

"Within the first fourteen pages of my Letters you find nothing, you say, liable to objection save one little circumstance. "In treating (you remark p. 6.) upon the integrity of the Socinian Teachers."—Here let me stop you, Sir; I am not

not *treating* on the *Integrity* of the *Socinian Teachers*. I only mention one instance of the integrity of some of them, by the by, with a view to illustrate and prove a certain point, which is, that not the *ability* nor *integrity* of any Teacher merely, but the *Holy Scriptures alone*, are the proper test of a doctrine. This is the subject I am considering in that passage, and this *only*. But to permit you to proceed. "In treating on the Integrity of the Socinian Teachers, you say, that some of them have given unequivocal proofs of that, by renouncing their temporal emoluments in the Church. Now, I deem this, (you add) no proof at all of their integrity, and for these two reasons. 1. Because they did not renounce those advantages with the certain assurance of poverty on account of their professing such tenets, but with a probable hope of their acquiring much more." This, Sir, remains to be proved, and till it be, my argument abides in full force. But you "think I cannot give you an instance where these expectations have not been realized by the emoluments they have derived from the sale and rental of Pews, &c." When you have fully proved that such expectations did really exist, previous to their relinquishing their benefices, then I will consider about instances. But you have another reason to give why their renouncing their emoluments in the Church is no proof of their integrity. "It is but a virtue, you say, proceeding from necessity; for as such opinions are incompatible with the established ministry of the land, they would of course be compelled to relinquish their benefices, and therefore they renounce what they will not be suffered to hold any longer." Here I wish you had been a little more explicit. Do you mean that a *man's holding*,

or that his *propagating* such opinions is incompatible with the established ministry? And what do you intend by the latter clause, *incompatible with the established ministry*? Is it synonymous with the following, *shall be compelled to relinquish their benefices*? Put what interpretation upon your words you please, you will not find it easy to prove your point, viz. that *whenever* Ministers of the established church *hold* or *propagate* the peculiar opinions of Socinus, they are compelled to relinquish their benefices. In the former case they have only to keep their opinions to themselves, and then they cannot be expelled for what is kept a secret from every one, and as to the latter, their *avowing* and *propagating* their opinions, I think you will not be able to produce perhaps one instance of any person compelled to relinquish his benefice on *this* account. However till this be done my argument remains in full force, and you have failed in finding the smallest flaw in the contexture of it. I am, Rev. Sir, your friend and servant in Christ,

JOSEPH BENSON.

L E T T E R II.

Rev. S I R,

HAVING, in the former Letter, found fourteen pages of my Defence unexceptionable and full of " cogent and well founded reasoning," as you have confessed, we pass on to a passage in the 15th page, which you have much objection to, and which I suspect chiefly stirred you up to make your animadversions on my pamphlet. In that page I had proposed this question, " Do you
" suppose

"suppose that an acquaintance with ancient or modern learning, that skill in languages, &c. can give an *ungodly man* a right to teach godliness?" To this question I have given, as you observe, a flat negative, and have also subjoined, "No, nor the imposition of a Bishop's hand neither." In this assertion, you say, I am wrong. For, "a Bishop, you affirm, can give an *ungodly man* a right to teach godliness." Now, Sir, either you or I are greatly mistaken, and, it is of consequence to know which of us it is. Observe, Sir, the question is not, whether a Bishop can, according to the Laws of the land, give an *ungodly man* a right to receive *Tythes* and other rewards of a public Teacher of Christianity? Or whether he can authorize him to teach as a School-Master, or private or public Lecturer on Divinity, or any other Science? But whether, according to the laws of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, he has authority to invest him with the sacred office of a *Minister of the Gospel*, and send him into the sheepfold as a *Pastor* over the *flock of Christ*?

Now, Sir, that he has *no such authority*, I am bold to say, I have irrefragably proved from p. 11, to the 17th of my Letters; nay from p. 11, to the 15th, "the cogent and well founded reasoning of which" *you yourself* have already acknowledged, declaring, "that it shall stand, because it is built on the rock of our Salvation *Jesus Christ the righteous*." All the particulars, which I have distinctly named and proved from the New Testament to be *essential* to the character of a Christian Minister, as *divine illumination, a birth from above, a conduct according to the Gospel, and the presence and blessing of the Lord Jesus*, necessarily imply and require *godliness* in the very nature of them, and can have no

place whatever in an ungodly man. What, Sir! is an ungodly man supernaturally enlightened and led by the Spirit of God? Has an ungodly man learned Christ, in the only way in which he can be learned? Has he *put off the old man* and *put on the new*, and is he *renewed in the spirit of his mind*? Is his conduct according to the Gospel, and is the Lord Jesus present with such an one? How is it then, Sir, that after you have seen and confessed "the cogency of the reasoning" contained in these pages, and affirmed, "that it would stand, because it was built upon a rock," that you yourself should be the first to contradict your own assertions, and to try to overthrow it in the only point it goes to establish? But, depend upon it, I shall not let you go thus. I shall bind you down to admit the conclusion, as you have already allowed the premises. I reduce you, therefore, to this dilemma: either own you were mistaken, in saying my reasoning was cogent, and well founded, and would stand; or acknowledge you were wrong in supposing that a Bishop has a right, according to the Laws of Christ, to appoint an *ungodly man* to preach the Gospel.

As I suppose my Letters are in the possession of *most* or *all* of those, into whose hands this will come, therefore I forbear repeating the proofs there produced. But the passages of Scripture I quoted, are a *demonstration*, that God has given no ungodly man a right to preach the Gospel. Indeed, an ungodly man *cannot* preach it, at least, not properly, for he does not *know it*. An ungodly man is a *natural* man, but a *natural man discerneth not the things of God*, and *cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, discerned by the light of that Spirit which he has not. How then is it possible he should teach them?

them? Can he teach what he does not know? Again: to preach the Gospel, or, as I had expressed it, to *teach godliness*, is, at least, to teach the true knowledge of God. But an ungodly man, according to St. John, 1 Epistle ii. 3. 4. *ordained or unordained*, does not know God himself, and therefore cannot teach the knowledge of him to others. Nay, David's words imply, not only that he is not *authorized* to teach, but that he is expressly *prohibited*. *Unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?* Now, Sir, can the imposition of a Bishop's hand give a man a right to run counter to the *plain, positive, and revealed* will of God? I think you will not be so hardy as to affirm it.

And pray, Sir, what says St. Paul upon this subject? He, you know, gives Timothy and Titus directions, at large, respecting the characters of those they were to ordain as *Elders* or *Bishops* (I shall shew you by and by, that these appellations were used indifferently of the *same persons*) does he make any exceptions in favour of any that were ungodly, or authorize them to ordain any such? I believe not. *A Bishop* (says he, 1 Tim. iii. 2.) *must be blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice, (neophyte, a young convert) lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, (must bear a fair, unblemished character in the eye of the world,) lest he fall into reproach,*

reproach, and the snare of the Devil. He gives directions exactly similar to Titus, (chap. i. 5.) For this cause (says he) I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders (termed also Bishops verse 7.) in every city. If any be blameless, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly; for a Bishop (the same person termed an Elder before) must be blameless as the steward of God; not self-willed, nor soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers. Nay, Sir, even the Deacons, who were properly only Stewards of their temporal matters, although some of them preached stately, (1 Tim. iii. 8.) were to be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, nor greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and they were first to be proved, or admitted on trial, and then, if found blameless, were to use the office of a Deacon. And what demonstrates still more of what immense importance the Apostle considered piety and virtue, and how indispensably necessary they were to the characters of all that ministered in holy things, or drew near to God, even the Deacons' wives were to be grave, sober, and faithful in all things. Now these directions he gave them (verse 15.) that they might know how they ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. And chap. v. 21. charges Timothy before God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, to observe these things, without preferring one before another, or doing any thing by partiality; commanding him withal,

to

to Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither (by so doing, nor by ordaining the ungodly) to be partaker of other men's sins, but to keep himself pure.

Now, Sir, shall your bare assertion that I am wrong, stand against all this complicated proof? Your *bare assertion* I say, for I must insist that you do not offer the shadow of an argument. "If you had said, (you proceed,) a Bishop could not give an ungodly man a right to teach *ungodliness*, I would admit the verity of your assertion, for a Bishop has no such power committed to him." Alas! Sir, is this all? Can you allow no more? Yes, you must and will allow more, before I have done with you. A Bishop, then, you think, "has not a power committed to him, to give an ungodly man a right to teach *ungodliness*, but he has the power," (yes, Sir, I allow, if he be a *truly, Christian Bishop*, under God, he has the power) "to send men out to teach godliness." But what kind of men? To make your argument of any force you should have said *ungodly* men. For of this *one thing* we were speaking, and this was the *sole* matter in debate between us. But when it came to the point, this you were ashamed to say, in express words, and therefore dropping the odious Epithet, although your argument absolutely required it to be inserted, you simply said, A Bishop has power to send *men* out to teach godliness; a sentiment I never called in question. Ah! Sir, what pitiful shuffling is this? Notwithstanding that, (as you tell us you never had the advantage of an University education, and therefore probably never learned *Logic*; yet *common sense* should teach you not to shift the terms of the question in this manner. You must give me leave to restore them, and then your proposition

tion is, "a Bishop has a power committed to him to send out *ungodly men* to teach *godliness*." Now, Sir, I ask how you prove this? By whom is this power committed? By *God* or the *Devil*? And where shall we find the charter that conveys it? Among the records of *Heaven* or those of *Hell*?

While you are considering how to answer these important questions, I will give you an intimation of what you are not aware. In granting that a Bishop cannot give an ungodly man a right to teach *ungodliness*, you in fact grant, that he cannot send him out to teach at all, I mean as a *Minister of Christ*. For if he go out to teach at all, he will teach *ungodliness*, by *precept*, or *example*, or *both*. This Jesus Christ himself has testified, *He that is not with me (says he) is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth*. The sending out an *ungodly man* as a shepherd of souls, with an injunction not to teach *ungodness*, is like letting loose a wolf among sheep, with an injunction not to *tear* or *kill* any of them: or the sending a man that has the plague into a populous Town, or large concourse of people, with a command not to infect any of them. Or, which may come yet nearer to the point, it may be compared to the admitting a person, who is utterly ignorant both of disorders and their remedies, and is himself sick of an infectious disease, to practise as a Physician. Having gotten his *Diploma*, he is held in reputation and treated with respect. He visits of course, family after family, where some are *sick* and others in *health*, gives advice and writes prescriptions. The consequence of this is, that if he happen by accident, to cure any of those that are sick, he kills *more* of them, while through the contagious disorder upon himself, he spreads infection among
all

all that are well, and leaves contagion and death behind him in every house he enters. This shews, Sir, that so far from going *beyond* the truth, in the position with which you find fault, I hardly came up to it. So far from saying *too much*, I rather said *too little*. I might have affirmed, not only that a Bishop has no right to admit an *ungodly* man into the sacred office of the Ministry, but that he has no right to admit an *unconverted, unregenerate, or unrenewed man*. See Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3—8, and Eph. iv. 21—24. But this language, however Scriptural, is now become Arabic to many professors of Christianity, both Clergy and Laity in this kingdom.

You are of opinion, however, that “ a prudent Bishop would not knowingly appoint a “ bad man to the sacred office, lest, as his life “ might give the lie to his doctrine,” *might give the lie*, Sir! What! is it a matter of doubt whether it would or not? If so, his *doctrine* must be as *bad* as his *life*. *A bad man*, Sir, I presume, lives a *bad life*. *For how can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?* And if his doctrine be not *bad* too, there must be an inconsistency between them, and they must give the lie, the one to the other. But to let you proceed, “ Lest, as “ his life might give the lie to his doctrine, it “ *would*,” (you mean *should*, but poor Priscian, to use your own expression, must have a blow by the by) “ if not render all his labours abortive, “ at least, weaken the efficacy of most of them, “ among those that are more influenced by example than precept.” And can you tell us who are not? Has not *example* more influence than *precept* upon all? Certainly it has, and if a man were to preach like an Archangel; if he were to utter the most glorious truths and in the most eloquent

quent manner, it would have but little effect upon those that *knew him*, if his conduct were unworthy of his profession. "But if he teach sound doctrine, though he should live a lie—it will not free his hearers from their obligations to observe what he inculcates." I grant, Sir, that *his breaking* the Laws of God, will not free the people, that have the misfortune to be entrusted to his care, from their obligations to keep those Laws; even as a Wolf's tearing the sheep, will not give the sheep a right to tear one another, or a Physician's communicating *infection*, or prescribing *poison*, when he should administer *Medicine* and transmit *health*, will not give his Patients authority to *infect* or *poison* one another.

But what has this to do with a Bishop's right to ordain an ungodly man for a Minister. Because a Wolf's tearing the sheep, gives the sheep no authority to tear one another; is it therefore lawful for an *Under Shepherd*, whose own the sheep are not, and who therefore has little concern for their welfare, to appoint a *Wolf* to watch over them: because forsooth, he happened to be related to, or to meet with one that is *out of bread*, and promises to do the work for small wages? And when the sheep are *torn* or *scattered*, will the chief Shepherd, when he appears and enquires for his sheep, admit of such reasoning as yours in excuse? Will it suffice to say, "Lord I was invested with authority by thee, to appoint those I thought proper to watch over thy flock: Therefore I appointed this wolf in sheep's cloathing, assuring him his business, was, not to tear and scatter, but only to feed and preserve? I am sorry the consequences have not been such as one would wish. I am sorry the sheep are torn and scattered: but it cannot be my fault, for I appointed a *wolf* to save them. It is true the wolf
neglected

neglected his duty. He neither led them after him into *green pastures*, nor conducted them to the *still waters*; nay, nor did he seek that which went astray, unless it were to devour it, nor defend those that remained unless to destroy them: but (as your language is in a similar case) "What! does the blessing of God among the sheep," (viz. their safety, health and growth) "depend on the virtue of the shepherd?" Or will the iniquity of this wolf, "their Pastor, deprive the flock of "the loving-kindness of the Lord? Shame on "the man that would brook an idea capable of "such an interpretation! Let him blush that "would utter a sentence which would admit of "such an unmerciful construction!" that would intimate that the flock might not be equally safe and happy under the care of a wolf, supposing him to be in sheep's clothing, as under that of the most skilful and diligent shepherd! Now, Sir, if this reasoning be extremely absurd, then is all you say on this head only like *weaving the spider's web for clothing, or hatching the cockatrice's eggs for food. Your webs shall not become garments, and he that eateth of such eggs dieth.*

But (you say p. 8.) "you have admitted yourself that the duty of mankind is, not to be led "by the ability and integrity of their Teachers, "but to enquire if the doctrine they teach be "true; and if so, then to practise what, after "such enquiry, they find to be right and the way "of truth." True: and what then? What do you infer from this? Because mankind are not implicitly to obey their Teachers, as Dr. T—— seemed to insinuate, under a notion that they are men of *ability and integrity*, but are to *search the Scriptures and judge for themselves*, therefore it is lawful to appoint persons, whose spirit and behaviour demonstrate that they are devoid of integ-

riety and ability, to oversee and feed the flock of Christ !

But you say p. 27. (for I wish to bring all you advance, without order or regularity, in different parts of your Pamphlet upon this subject, into one point of view) though " it cannot be denied that " persons manifestly unholy offer themselves as " candidates for Holy Orders and are admitted " thereto; yet where does the fault lie? Neither " in the Bishop alone nor in the sacred body at " large: but in the people." In the people, Sir? What have the people to do with it? Do they choose their own Ministers, or nominate, in general, the persons they wish to be ordained to serve them? Are they consulted? or is their consent more or less asked or expected? No: by no means. It is no difficult matter, Sir, to say where this fault lies. It lies 1st, in those that sign the Testimonials of such Candidates, whether *Heads of Houses, Tutors and Fellows* in the University, or *Rectors, Vicars and Curates*, in other places; who sign them, I say, either without being assured from *their own knowledge*, that these Candidates are pious and virtuous persons, and persons well qualified for the sacred office; or more especially if they have reason to believe, as is too often the case, that they are *quite the reverse, prophane, immoral*, and unacquainted with those great truths of the Gospel, which they undertake to teach the people. Again 2dly, the fault lies in the *Bishops themselves*, whenever they ordain persons, of whose want of Piety and Virtue they have manifest *cause of suspicion*.

But you say, " The Church hath provided " Laws to guard against such evils. For each " person who is to be admitted a Candidate for " Holy Orders, must produce (exclusive of his " Testimonial, signed by three respectable Clergy-
" men,

“ men, or from his College,) a Paper called a
 “ *Si quis*, which is to be published in his Parish-
 “ Church, that if any persons know any thing to
 “ alledge against him which may disqualify him
 “ for that office he may not impose upon his
 “ Diocesan and surreptitiously take orders.” A
 very good Law this indeed, Sir; but what avails
 it if it be not put in execution? But you pro-
 ceed, “ Whenever such accusation has been laid
 “ before a Bishop, I challenge you or any man to
 “ produce a single instance, where orders have
 “ been conferred upon that person without the
 “ Allegations being proved false or malicious, or
 “ till some time have elapsed wherein the Delin-
 “ quent hath shewn evident signs of contrition by
 “ amendment of life.” I presume, Sir, such al-
 legations are seldom brought: For the old Proverb
 is too often verified, Like Priest, like People.
 The *Church-Wardens* and *Parishioners* (if we be-
 lieve you) frequently reel through the streets, as
 well as their *Rectors*, *Vicars* and *Curates*, and of
 course will not be very forward to inform against
 those that are overtaken in the same vices that
 they themselves are addicted to.

But (p. 28.) “ If any of you methodistical saints
 “ should hear this *Si quis* published and know any
 “ thing of the young, (or old) man to justify an
 “ impeachment, it should be your business as it
 “ is your duty immediately to apprise his Lord-
 “ ship, that scandal may not be brought upon the
 “ Ministry by the admission of so improper a
 “ person.” Hear ye Methodists! Mr. *Russel*,
Curate of Pershore, in the Diocese of Worcester,
 calls upon you *publicly* to inform the Bishop, if
 you know any thing *immoral*, or *prophane*, or
contrary to the *Gospel of Christ*, in the conduct
 of any that offer themselves as Candidates for
 Holy Orders. And he assures you, that “ you,

“ *as well as others, are bound to do this in Foro conscientiae*, in the court of conscience, but more particularly *you*, as you profess so much more righteousness than other men :” professing to keep yourselves sober, when others get drunk, and to be *chaste* when others are *lewd*, and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, when others, whether Priests or People, as Mr. Russel has informed you, too often disgrace their high and holy calling. Mr. Russel, is right, my brethren, these informations will come best from *you*, as you, in general, by the grace of God, stand clear of those vices of which you may be called to accuse these Candidates for Orders. One thing only I would advise you to attend to in this matter; when you inform against any, by all means, produce Mr. Russel’s *Hints to Methodists and Dissenters*, as your motive and authority for so acting.

But to return, to prove that the profligacy of a Minister’s life, will not exculpate his hearers from the neglect of any one of their duties (a point which no body denies) you have recourse, to the 25th Article of our Church, in which you think, “ that doctrine is implied in some distant manner.” But, Sir, this was not the point to be proved; but whether a *Bishop*, or *any one else*, has authority from Christ to ordain an ungodly man to the work of the ministry. And I think you will not say that *this*, or any *other* Article of our Church implies this in any manner, however distant.

However, “ Having alluded, to this Article, “ you take occasion,” (no wonder, Sir, you apologize for want of connexion, for what has this to do with the proof of your point ?) from thence to say, “ I hope you will excuse me, if I who “ am *Young*, do give to you, my *Elder*, an whole-
“ some

"some admonition from thence." Certainly, Sir, I hope I shall always be ready to hear and receive *wholesome* admonitions. "You have taken upon you, (you proceed) the office of a spiritual Counsellor and Guide. The right to that office I shall question hereafter, when I come to speak of Ordination. That being the case, I make a candid appeal to yourself, if you would not be doing as essential a service to the interests of Christ's kingdom, as you do now, if, after having selected a suitable Text, you were to take this Article to be illustrated;" —Quere, Sir, had I not better take the *Article* for the Text? I have not been accustomed to name a Text and then immediately to set myself to illustrate *another subject*. Besides, I fear, it will not be easy to find a suitable Text. But, perhaps, you can help me in this case. You proceed, "And by the force of your eloquence to prove to mankind that the impiety of the Lives of their Clergy do not in the least deprive them of any benefit to be derived from the means of grace, which Christ hath promised them through the functions of the Priestly Office." You mean, Sir, (for I wish to understand you right, that I may execute your orders punctually) just as the *negligence* of an *Hireling* that is appointed to oversee and feed the flock, or the *laziness* of a *dumb dog that cannot bark, that sleeps, lies down, and loves to slumber*, do not IN THE LEAST deprive the sheep of any benefit intended to be afforded them in the Pastoral care. And just as the carelessness of a *watchman*, who when he seeth the sword coming, bloweth not the Trumpet and warneth not the people, but the sword cometh and taketh them away, does not IN THE LEAST deprive the people of the *preservation and security* which they meant to insure by appoint-

ing a Watchman. And just as the unskilfulness and inattention of a Physician, do not IN THE LEAST deprive his patients of any benefit to be derived from the *healing Art*, and which they would receive from the attendance of a man of judgment and experience. Or (to use one comparison more) just as his being sick of a contagious disorder himself, and his carrying infection with him wherever he goes, will not IN THE LEAST deprive them of the little health they have, or impede their recovery from sickness, in the course of his visiting them from day to day.

These, Sir, are the best illustrations of your meaning I can think of, and now, as I understand you better than I did at first, I allow, upon second thoughts, that it might not be amiss to introduce a discourse of this kind, as you say, by a suitable Text: as *Addison*, you know, Sir, selected passages from the *Classics*, and prefixed them, by way of *Mottos* to his papers in the *Speculator*. And without giving you the trouble of searching the Scriptures, which to a person of your gay turn of mind might not be very pleasant work, I believe I can furnish myself with such a Text. Three or four passages occur this moment to my mind, any of which, I think, might answer the purpose admirably well; especially as the Text, you know, is to be a mere *Motto*, and the *Article* is the subject to be illustrated. And, Sir, if there should happen to be a contradiction between the *Text* and the *Sermon*, it will not be the less suitable for that: for it will then be entirely in the modern way. Now, Sir, the passages of Scripture I refer to are the following. And as I am entirely indebted to you for the very *first idea* of such an undertaking, you shall chuse which of them you please. The first is in the 34th chap. of *Ezekiel*. Thus saith
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the Lord God unto the shepherds; *Wo be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered because there was no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. And my sheep wandered over all the mountains, and upon every high bill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Or, if you should prefer it, another on the same subject may be found, Zech. xi. 16, which I shall not quote here. Or, one might be selected from our Lord's remarkable discourse, as recorded John the 10th; suppose verse 1st. *He that entereth not in by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, is a thief and a robber. Or ver. 12. He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.**

You see, Sir, any of these Texts *prove and illustrate* your doctrine admirably well, and shew, to a demonstration, that "the ignorance, impiety, or indolence of a Minister of the Gospel do not IN THE LEAST deprive his flock of the benefit to be derived from the means of grace, and the functions of the Priestly office!" And there is another, which, in less compass, and in a much
more

more concise and clear manner, sets forth the same *consoling* doctrine, consoling I mean, to those *benevolent* Clergymen, who though they choose to proceed forward in the high road to Hell themselves, yet have so much *good will* to their hearers that they do not wish *one* of them to follow them. It is the short sentence made so much use of by Dr. T——, in what you call his celebrated Sermon. *If the blind lead the blind, both of them shall fall into the ditch.*

As an illustration of this Text 'were it not that the *Article*, and not the *Text*, is the subject to be illustrated,) one might quote sundry passages, which the margins of our Bibles refer us to, as Isaiah ix. 16. *The Leaders of this people do cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed.* Or Micah iii. 5. *Thus saith the Lord concerning the Prophets that make my people err; that bite with the teeth, and cry, PEACE; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him: therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision:—and the sun shall go down over the Prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.* Jer. vi. 14. might be quoted also, *They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, PEACE, PEACE, when there is no peace:* or Ezekiel iii. 17. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at MY mouth, and give them warning from ME. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.* These passages I mention as being such as might properly enough be used in *illustration* of the Text, as you plainly see; that any of them, contain *evident* proof

proof of the doctrine, you have so much at heart to establish, viz. that "the impiety" (including the *ignorance, sloth, negligence, and wickedness*) "of a Clergyman does not IN THE LEAST deprive his hearers of any benefit to be derived from the means of grace,—through the functions of the Priestly office."

But, Sir, as this would be quite a new subject to me, I should not like to speak upon it *extempore*, and as I am neither accustomed to read written Sermons, nor to commit them to memory and repeat them; a thought strikes me, that if, to excuse you a little *toil and labour*, I compose a discourse for you on this subject, *you*, by all means should *read it*. I the rather wish this, because if it should happen to be but a poor discourse, still that will make no material difference, for you have assured us (p. 38.) "that, for your part, you know yourself capable of delivering a written discourse in a manner that shall both edify your hearers and impress them with principles of devotion to God and love to man." Indeed, as to *devotion to God*, we may leave that out: to beget *that*, you know, is to be no part of our object. Our object is, simply, to beget in mankind *veneration* for and *love* to *wicked Clergymen*. And upon a topic of this kind, I expect you will be exceedingly animated, and that the effects of your elocution will be astonishing.

Now, Sir, it is not my intention to be at the pains to compose you this Sermon, that it may be delivered merely in *one* congregation. I must request that you will go through the kingdom with it; and especially that you will preach it in every parish where there happens to be an ungodly Minister. How many such parishes there may be, I don't pretend to say. It was by an entire mistake of my meaning, in my Letters, that
you

you supposed me to assert there were only a dozen such. This you will easily see, if you will be at the pains of reading the passage again (p. 56.) But be they *many* or *few*, that can make no great difference to you. Your *Reclor* or *Vicar*, who possibly may find his own interest in it, will easily spare you for so good a work; and you, to accomplish such an end, will not think much of your labour; and if need be, many will subscribe to support so well devised a *mission*, and so promising a *Missionary*. And, what will be a great consolation to you, you will not need to defile your sacred character or office, by treading on *unconsecrated* ground. For, no doubt, for a business of this kind, even the *Cathedrals* and much more the *Parochial Churches* and *Chapels* will be open to you. Or if you think that the *Methodist Congregations* particularly need such advice and instruction, I will either engage to give them such notice of your coming, that they shall attend upon you at the Churches as you pass along; or, if you can condescend so far as to enter our chapels, I will use my utmost influence with the *Preachers* and *Trustees*, that they may be open for your reception. And I really think, Sir, as this is quite an *extraordinary case*, you need not fear the censure of your superiors, if you should take this extraordinary step. You hardly think *I* have a right to preach at all: but nevertheless, you say, "If it be on *any occasion* lawful for you to invade the Priest's (you mean the *Minister's*) office, certainly it must be on this:" viz. to inculcate on people that "the impiety of the lives of the Clergy does not *in the least* deprive them of any benefits to be derived from the means of grace, and the functions of the *Priestly*, (you mean again the *ministerial*) office." Just so, Sir, if it be on any occasion lawful for you to enter a
Methodist

Methodist Preaching-house, and address a *Methodist* congregation, it must be on *this*, when your *professed* and *sole* design is to persuade people to cleave to the Church, and attend the ministry of ungodly Clergymen. And here, Sir, it may not be amiss to give you a *specimen* of the manner in which, it seems to me, these congregations of *Methodists* may be very *properly* and *successfully* addressed on this subject. After reading one of the suitable Texts, we spoke of, and observing as you do (p. 9.) that "the object of our Saviour's mission was not only to bring glory to God, but peace on earth, *external* as well as *internal*," we may shew, that "by no means, can we forward these designs, so likely as by recommending union" between light and darkness, good and evil, "and by persuading men to be of *one mind*" with their blind Leaders, and to "resort to one place for the worship of their Creator," without regarding whether *truth* or *error* be there preached, whether *wholesome food* or *poison* be there dispensed; it being absurd to suppose that the divine blessing of spiritual nourishment in *wisdom* and *grace*, is confined to *food* and withheld from *poison*, or that the minister's dispensing *poison* instead of *food*, will IN THE LEAST deprive his hearers of the spiritual health and growth intended to be conveyed to their souls by the ministry of the word. It may then be proper to endeavour (as you intimate) "to impress their minds with sentiments of the great efficacy of the labours of these men (such as you hereafter describe as attending the visitations) appointed to watch over their souls, and for the neglect of which they must give an account (you declare) with a terrible sentence to be denounced against them at the coming of our Lord to judgment." I mean, Sir, those *ungodly* Ministers, commissioned

oned to teach *godliness*, those *wolves* in *sheep's clothing*, appointed to watch over the *sheep*, those *hirelings*, whose *own* the *sheep* are not, and who therefore care not for them, who have not entered in by the door into the *sheep-fold*, but have climbed up another way, and therefore are thieves and robbers, coming not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; who feed themselves but not the flock; who instead of feeding, kill with the poison of their false doctrine those they found fed already, and who eat the fat and clothe them with the wool, but who strengthen not the diseased, nor heal that which is sick, nor bind up that which is broken, nor bring again that which is driven away, nor seek that which is lost.

Now, Sir, as soon as we find their minds impressed with sentiments of the GREAT EFFICACY of the labours of these men, the next thing will be to convince them, as you signify p. 10. "that the presence and blessing of the Lord Jesus" may be as abundantly felt under the ministry "of these men," being *episcopally* ordained and heard on consecrated ground, as under that of the most wise and holy that are appointed by Elders only, and therefore are, you are sure, "unauthorized and self-ordained." This you know, Sir, may easily be done. We have only to remind them of Christ's promise, *Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world*, a promise this, made first, indeed, to the *Apostles* and their *disciples*, but transmitted by the hands of St. Peter and his successors the *Bishops of Rome*, to the Ministers of the Protestant Churches, I mean only those *episcopally* ordained, (as you have proved, Sir, with such clearness of argument p. 23.) and now applicable to every Clergyman of the Church of England however *ungodly*. Or if we find that they are refractory and do not
obey

obey this important truth, but are disposed to distinguish in this matter, and to prefer the ministry of a *wise* and *holy* man, especially if of the established Church, to that of one who is *ignorant* and *wicked*, we have only to demand of them, as you do in this page, how their conduct is to be reconciled with that of St. Paul? "When a division "arose among his Christian converts, and they "began to file off into sects and parties, one crying out, *I am of Paul*, another, *I am of Apollos*, "and another, *I am of Cephas*, each supposing "their (you should say *his*) own Leader to be "the best man: he breaks forth into this tender "strain of inspired Oratory, Who then is Paul, "and who is Apollos, &c.? thereby teaching "them that if they expected to derive any good "from the ministry of either of their Teachers "they must ask it of God, and not ascribe that "power to the creature which is only due to the "Creator." This argument, Sir, must be very convincing indeed! *Paul, Apollos and Cephas*, were all *truly pious men*, and the *servants of Christ*, and the Corinthians are censured by the Apostle for extolling *one* of them above *another*, therefore it is evident to a demonstration, that it must be a *great crime* to prefer the ministry of a *servant of Christ*, before that of a *servant of the Devil*!

Having thus fully convinced their *judgments*, we may try to move their *affections*, and especially that of *shame* and *remorse*, so necessary in true repentance. We may therefore now properly address them in the language you use to me in this same page. "Oh! how can men of your "spiritual knowledge imbibe or promulge a sentiment so repugnant to the whole drift and tenor "of the sacred Oracles;" as to suppose you will be better instructed by the intelligent and well

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informed

informed than by the ignorant, or more incited to the practice of every thing excellent and praise worthy, by the discourse, conversation and example of the *pious* and *virtuous*, than by those of the *vicious* and *prophane* ! " What ! does " the blessing of God among the people depend " on the virtue of the Priest ? Or will the iniquity of the Pastor, (the negligent shepherd, " the careless hireling above described) deprive " the flock of the mercy and loving-kindness of " the Lord ? For shame, friends, that you ever " broached an idea, capable of such an interpretation ! Blush, that you once uttered a sentiment which would admit of so unmerciful a " construction ! " My brethren, let me advise " you to take the conduct of the Apostle (in the " forementioned passage) as a *model* in this respect, and do all you can to concur with (ungodly) Ministers of the established Church in " one *common cause* (of promoting godliness) by " one *common way*."

Hoping, Sir, that these general *out-lines* of the Sermon, sketched chiefly by your *own pencil*, will meet with your approbation, at the same time that they give you some idea of the *perfect picture* which may be drawn when we are fully agreed upon the plan, and you have signified your consent to undertake the mission. I break off here, and subscribe myself, Your fellow-helper for the good of ungodly Ministers,

JOSEPH BENSON.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

Rev. SIR,

I FIND, in proceeding further in the perusal of your Pamphlet, that one of the most serious charges you bring against the *Methodists* is, that they are *Schismatics*. "Surely, you say to me (p. 12.) you are not sensible that *schism* is a crime or you would not be the Leader of a Party (you mean, I presume, a Leader in a Party) who are guilty of it; guilty of it in a greater degree than other Sectaries." I am sensible, Sir, that *schism* is a crime, but not that the *Methodists* are guilty of it, even in any degree, much less that they are guilty of it, in a greater degree than other people. I shall therefore be glad to see how you prove your charge. This you attempt to do as follows, "You say, that you (the *Methodists*) cordially approve in general even of the service of our church and much more of her doctrine." We do, Sir, and therefore attend that service, most of us, at all opportunities, and hearken to that doctrine whenever it is preached by the Church Ministers; only absenting ourselves in Town or Country, when that doctrine is openly contradicted and denied, and a doctrine diametrically opposite, as *Justification by the merit of works*, or *absolute, unconditional Predestination* is inculcated, or where the officiating Minister is so notoriously wicked that his life is a scandal to his profession. Well, you say, "this being the case, you have no cloak for your sin." What *sin* do you mean, Sir? The sin of *schism*? Yes, you say, "you become *schismatics* for non-essentials."

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" Other sectaries, you proceed, dissent from us on account of some doctrinal opinion to which they cannot agree," or, you should have added, on account of some ceremony, such as *kneeling* at the Lord's Supper, wearing a *surplice*, or using a *form of prayer*, with which they cannot comply, " and so far are to be excused from the guilt of *schism*; but not so with you." No: we do not, as a body, *dissent* from you at all, unless when you dissent from yourselves in *principle* or *practice*, denying your own doctrines or departing from your own professions. Nay, we so admire your doctrines, in particular, and are so persuaded of their importance to the salvation of mankind, that, with great expence and labour, we build *Chapels* and *Preaching-houses* in all parts of the British dominions in Europe, and in the West-Indies, as well as throughout the Northern Continent of America, for the sole purpose of having them explained and enforced, at stated times, to and upon all that will attend, and keep many hundreds of men employed in travelling about from day to day, to propagate and spread the knowledge of them; meaning hereby partly to assist those few pious and enlightened Clergy, that *clearly* and *faithfully* preach these doctrines, and partly to supply the lack of service of the much greater number who do not. With a view to the same end we print and disperse a variety of books of all sizes, although chiefly small tracts of low price, on doctrinal, experimental and practical Christianity, even that *Christianity* that is held forth in the sacred *Scriptures*, and in the *Articles*, *Homilies*, and *Service* of our own church. And as to the ceremonies above-mentioned, enjoined by the church, we are so far from disapproving of *these*, that in most places where we judge it requisite, for the salvation of souls, to have

have service in church-hours, we use a form of prayer, and are found *kneeling* at the Lord's-Table in the parish-churches, whenever the Lord's Supper is administered, throughout this kingdom and Ireland, and that in greater numbers, frequently, than other people. Nay, were it not for us, it is notorious that, in many places, the communicants would be very few. And to keep as close to the Church as possible, and to prove to all men that we object to nothing, almost, respecting it, but the *errors* and *sins* of its corrupt members, whose intimacy we shun, and from whom alone we separate; we have hitherto refused, in general, the earnest request of many of our people, to administer to them the Lord's Supper in our own Chapels, not as you suppose, because we judge ourselves "incompetent" for such a service, but because we wish our people to attend at the established church to receive it. And yet for these reasons, it seems, we are greater schismatics than other people!

Your assertion, Sir, is such a paradox, that I believe, I might fairly excuse myself the trouble of writing, and the public of reading one word more about it. However, for the conviction of those *uninformed* or *prejudiced* individuals, who may still be inclined to consider us in the same light, I shall examine this matter to the bottom, and enquire what this sin of *schism* is, which, it must be confessed, is mentioned and condemned in the New Testament. Now, in order to this; all I have to do is to find out and fix, the sense of the passages where it occurs. The first of them is 1 Cor. i. 10. *Now I beseech you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (anomalæ schisms) among you: but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in*

the same judgment. Now, Sir, here you observe the being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, stands opposed to *Schisms*, which, therefore, are the not being so joined. But who were they whom the Apostle wished to be thus joined together? The righteous and the wicked? the holy and the prophane? No, by no means, but the Church of God at Corinth, (verse 2.) *the sanctified in Christ Jesus, those called to be saints, with those that in every place called on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: the faithful in Christ, to whom saving grace was given (verse 4.) and who waited (verse 7.) for the coming of our Lord, and concerning whom the Apostle was confident that Christ would confirm them unto the end, that they might be blameless in the day of Christ Jesus.* Now, Sir, what has this to do with the conduct you censure in us? does the Apostle blame these sincere and devout followers of Christ at Corinth because they came out from among the wicked, were separate, and did not touch the unclean thing? or because, fearing the Lord, they assembled upon occasion, to speak one to another, and receive the word of exhortation? By no means. Nothing of this kind is so much as hinted at. The thing that he blames in them is that they were not united among themselves, or, as Dr. Whitby expresses it, "were not perfectly joined together in the same belief" and in the same kind affections, one towards "another." And so far, Sir, as this is the case with the pious in England, of whatever denomination, so far as they are alienated in their affections one from another, and do not all speak the same thing, so far, and no further, are they *schismatics*. But to suppose they are *schismatics*, because they separate themselves from the great mass of the ungodly in this nation, who under a profession

profession of Christianity practise every abomination, and because they obey the Apostolic command and *for sake not the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is*, is to discover a marvellous ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the whole nature and genius of Christianity.

“Avoid *divisions or schisms*, as the original is, (says Henry on the passage) that is *an alienation of affection from each other*. In the great things of religion be of a mind: but when there is not an unity of *sentiment*, let there be an union of *affection*.” *Factiones intelligit* (says Calvin, quoted by Pool, in that admirable work his *Synopsis Criticorum*) *exartas, non ob doctrinae diversitatem. sed ob prerogativas Ministrorum*, ‘He means (by schisms here) the factions that arose among them, not on account of any difference of doctrine, but on account of the privileges of Ministers.’ *Sed nec eo intelligit Schismata* (says Erasmus) *quibus reciditur ab unitate Ecclesiae, sed quasdam velut sectas intra ecclesiam, dum alii alios patronis eorum que nominibus gloriarentur*, ‘He does not mean those schisms (as they have been called) whereby a departure is made from the unity of the Church, but certain parties within the Church,’ that is, among the *faithful*, the *truly pious*, those that so name the name of Christ, as to depart from iniquity, and hereby shew that they, indeed, belong to him.

The meaning of the word in the next passage, chap. x i. 18, is exactly similar. *When ye come together, in the church* (or, ἐκκλησία congregation) I hear that there be *divisions or schisms among you*, and I partly believe it. Now here, Sir, the schisms were in the *Assembly met together in one place*. “*Dissensiones*, says Erasmus, *vel de cibis* “*ipsis et potibus, vel de loco recumbendi, vel de*
“ *tempore*

*" tempore cœnæ incohanda, maxime inter divites
 " et pauperes, quorum isti ab illis contemneban-
 " tur."* Differences, either concerning the ele-
 ments of the Lord's Supper, or concerning the
 place of meeting, or the time of beginning the
 supper, chiefly between the rich and the poor,
 the latter of whom were despised by the former.
*It happened already in those early times, says
 Beza, what in our age hath fallen out abundantly
 more, that what was instituted with a view to
 unite the faithful in one body, was converted into
 a standard of division.* This was undoubtedly
 the kind of schism here meant, and of this kind
 of schism, very different from that you mention,
 I grant the Methodists are now in danger. They
 are in danger of contending with, and separating
 from each other respecting the very thing about
 which the Corinthians quarrelled, viz. the *Lord's
 Supper*, some of them, in order to avoid a separa-
 tion from the Church of England, wishing still
 to resort to the established Church for that divine
 ordinance, and others, under a notion that it is
 unlawful to communicate with the ungodly, as
 we generally must do, if we receive it at the
 church, urging that we ought to have it adminis-
 tered among ourselves. But what has this to do
 with the Schism with which you charge us?
 Here, says Whitby, the word *schisms* is used,
 not of men separating from the church, but
 coming together in the church, and eating the
 Lord's Supper separately, and so as not to join
 with the whole assembly in that ordinance. So
 the word also is used chap. i. 10. not of a se-
 paration from the unity of the Catholic church,
 saith Estius, but of *sects* and *divisions* in the
 church, or among the truly faithful and pious,
 none else being, properly speaking, members of
 the church. It is plain, (says a late judicious
 Writer,)

Writer,) that by *schisms* is not meant any separation from the church, but uncharitable divisions in it. For the Corinthians continued to be one church, and notwithstanding all their strife and contention, there was no separation of any one party from the rest, with regard to external communion.

The other passage, 1 Cor. xii. 25. is a full confirmation of all this. *That there might be no schism in the body*, saith the Apostle, *but that the Members might have the same care for each other, and whether one member suffer, all the members might suffer with it, or one member be honoured all the members might rejoice with it.* Whence it appears that so far as this is *not* the case; so far as the Members of Christ's mystical body (and by the by only the *truly pious* are members thereof) have not a *care* and *feeling* for each other, similar to that which the members of the human body have for one another, so far, I say, there is a *schism* in the body.

Now, Sir, as these, I believe, are all the places where *Church Schisms* are mentioned in the New Testament, I should be glad to know how it appears that any of them fix the guilt of *schism* upon the people called Methodists with regard to the Church of England? To suppose, Sir, that we are *Schismatics* because we come out from among the ungodly and meet together, as opportunity offers, is to condemn the generation of God's children in every age and nation under heaven. For in every age and nation since the time that the sons of God separated themselves from the children of men and begun to call on the Lord, (Gen. iv. 26.) they that have *feared the Lord* have made it their practice to *speak often one to another*, and for this purpose to assemble together at proper times, and, as far as might be consistent

consistent with their duty to their families, friends, and mankind in general, have separated themselves from the world, and shunned the Society of evil doers, knowing that evil communications, as the Proverb is, corrupt good manners.

This, Sir, was the practice of the ancient Servants of God, as appears from sundry passages of the Old Testament, and especially from Mal. iii. 16. a portion of holy writ to which I have just alluded. This was the practice of the Lord Jesus, and of his first disciples. The primitive Christians in general, did, in their day, precisely what we do in ours. They did not withdraw themselves entirely from the worship of the Jewish Temple and Synagogues. On the contrary, they assembled therein whenever it was convenient, as long as they were permitted. But nevertheless, they shunned the corrupt ways and fashions of the world, and had no further intercourse with the wicked than their situation on earth rendered unavoidable, or was necessary in order to do their fellow creatures good. In the meantime, they forsook not the assembling of themselves together, but kept separate meetings from day to day, that they might converse, pray, and break bread together; as also that they might receive from the Lord Jesus, his Apostles, or the first Christian Teachers, that instruction in the great and important Truths of Christianity, which they neither expected to find, nor could find in the Synagogues of the Jews. Hence it was that they were the objects of scorn and reproach among men, and represented by the wicked Priests and Rulers, as *Sectarians*, and those that associated with them as a *Sect*. (See Acts xxiv. 14. and xxviii. 22.) the reason of which, the Lord Jesus did not fail, fully and frequently to make them

them acquainted with. *If the world hate you,* says he, *ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my sayings, they will also keep yours.*

Here you have the whole origin of this dreadful charge of *Schism*: We should not hear one word of it, if we did not most of us differ, as to our spirit and behaviour, from the generality of mankind. *If we were of the world, the world would love its own: but if we be, as, I trust, in general, we are, the followers of Jesus, it cannot love us, unless the word of God be of none effect. Think not, said Jesus, that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and a man's foes shall be those of his own household. Marvel not, my brethren, said St. John, if the world hate you: we know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,* meaning that they could not themselves have loved the brethren, had they not been passed from death to life, and that their being passed from death to life was evidenced by their loving the Brethren.

From this cause it was, that the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses* were such objects of hatred abroad, and the followers of *Wickliffe* at home, when the Reformation was beginning to dawn; and for the same reason it was that the first Reformers, in our own and in foreign countries, were first held up to view as *Heretics* and *Schismatics*, and then persecuted,

persecuted, imprisoned and put to death. And it is an amazing thing to me, that you, who, among other Protestants, stand charged with this same sin of *Schism* by the Church of Rome, should have the effrontery to prefer it against your Protestant Brethren, (who do not differ from you either in doctrine or modes of worship,) on much weaker grounds, viz. because they assemble together, at stated times, to help one another by prayer, instruction, reproof, and exhortation to make their *calling and election sure*. This is what the Church of Rome, corrupt as it is, would not, perhaps, now do. It would not stigmatize those as *Schismatics*, who held to its *doctrines and forms of worship*, merely because they reformed their lives, lived in the fear of God and used every means in their power to help each other to heaven.

“ But you build Chapels and appoint Preachers of your own ? ” We do, Sir, and for the reasons already mentioned, viz. to supply the lack of service of the Church Clergy, many of whom either neglect to preach, or even utterly deny the doctrines of their own Church, while, as you yourself know and in your pamphlet confess, the lives of some of them are so distant from every thing sacred, that great scandal is given by their conduct, and the religion of Jesus is fallen into great disrepute. “ Well (you say) there are laws in our land which are effectual to remove that grievance, if duly enforced.” There are, but who are to enforce those Laws? Why, you say, “ If you Methodists are in reality what you pretend to be, firm believers in Christ’s Gospel and anxious for the salvation of souls, no consideration of human fear, no worldly motives will prevent you from seeing that such whole-some laws are duly executed.” We must have more

wealth, and be higher in office, Sir, than most of us are at present, before any thing of this kind, humanly speaking, will be in our power. For *while the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means, the people love to have it so.* But "by this resolute conduct," (that is by lodging informations and prosecuting Clergymen in the Spiritual Court) "you would become the light of the world, and public blessings in those places where you may dwell." It would be in a new way then, a way in which neither our Lord, nor his Apostles, nor his followers in any age have set us an example. And, sure I am, instead of *public blessings*, we should be deemed by the generality, *public curses* and the pests of society. But if you are quite of opinion that *suits at Law*, suits in the most intricate, expensive and tedious of all Courts, in *Spiritual Courts*, will do more to reform the world than the publication of *the gospel of the grace of God*, and will *yourself* set us the example in getting these laws, you speak of, executed, I will not affirm but we may do something, by way of imitation of you. You cannot be at a loss to know such Clergymen. You have been present, it seems, at the Visitations, "where the Clergy (you assure us p. 14.) meet to stare at and compliment each other in the habiliments of their order, to hear a controversial sermon which is not long remembered, to listen to a wholesome charge that is too seldom observed in practice, and afterwards to eat and drink, so much, perhaps, beyond the bounds of temperance, that they cannot with any decency, or propriety, rebuke their *churchwardens*, or *parishioners*, for *reeling* about the streets, lest the rebuke should be too justly retorted upon them: THOU THAT PREACHEST TO

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"OTHERS

" OTHERS AND ART THYSELF A CAST
" AWAY !"

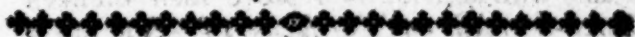
Now, Sir, if this be a just description (and certainly you would not exaggerate here!) of the Clergy of your own Arch-deaconry, you will not I presume, have far to go, to find these objects of your charitable labours. You may meet with them, no doubt, on all sides of you, and you must be better acquainted with the various forms of *spiritual Law* than we are, and must have more interest with those that sit at the head of that department, and to whom it belongs to punish offenders. You therefore have every advantage to make a successful beginning. And for your encouragement, Sir, remember your own words. " By thus enforcing Church discipline, the morals, both of Priests and People " would be happily improved, the face of our " land would be changed from impiety to holiness, and we should be turned from the power " of Satan to God. Your visitations would then " be attended to, on the excellent principles of their " institution, and primitive usage, and no longer " remain " (what you have just confessed they now are) " little better than meetings pro forma, " or for eating and drinking far beyond the " bounds of temperance."

In the mean time, till this new plan has been tried and proved to be successful, " those *godly* " persons (as you, in derision, term them) of " this nation denominated Methodists," must still keep up, what you call their " conventicle associations," which they have found by experience to be productive of spiritual good to myriads. And, to supply the lack of service of such gluttonous men and wine-bibbers as you have just described, whom they cannot, with you, view, as " duly appointed " to minister in
holy

holy things, nor think it safe to trust to as "spiritual guides," they must still encourage, and assemble to hear those Teachers, of their own choice, by whom, under God, they were *called out of darkness into light*, and whose ministry they have long found to be *the power of God unto salvation*. Leaving you, therefore, seriously to consider of the best way to prosecute your own plan, and "see that the coercive Laws of the " Church be carried into execution against the " disobedient and refractory " (as you express yourself p. 14.) of the Clergy, in the several parishes, at least, of your Arch-deaconry, where according to your own account a reformation is so much wanted, I now, subscribe myself, your well-wisher in Christ,

JOSEPH BENSON.

Sat. evening 6 o'clock, Aug. 31, 1793.



L E T T E R IV.

REV. SIR,

YOUR "Eyelids were disposed to slumber," as you have told us, (p. 15.) and you were off your guard, when you drew towards the conclusion of your former Letter, or you would hardly have been so communicative to me and the public, as you then were. You have given me information of what I neither knew nor suspected before. That there were some ungodly men, here and there, in holy Orders, that would eat and drink to excess, I had reason to believe.

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But that the corruption of the Clergy was so great and general as you represent, I did not imagine. Although I must not *contradict* you lest unpleasant consequences should follow: yet for the credit of *Christianity* and of the *established Church*, I hope your colouring is *too strong*, or, at least, that however it may be in your neighbourhood, matters are not in quite so bad a situation in all other parts of the Kingdom. Be this as it will, I really think you deserve, and, I dare say, at the next Visitation, will meet with a severe reprimand (if you have not met with one already) from your superiors, for exposing in this manner the nakedness of your Mother and Brethren. You pretend to find fault with me, Sir, and the Methodists for "meddling with the Clergy." But when have we done any thing like this? When have we represented the Clergy in general, for you make no exceptions, "as eating and drinking so far beyond the bounds of temperance" even at the Visitations, as not to be able with decency to reprove their drunken *Church-Wardens* and *Parishioners*? And this is not the only place in which you turn your arms against your brethren the Clergy. Even in the Note (p. 48.) in which you call out for an advance of your wages, you are so imprudent, as to fall foul upon those, on whom your advancement depends, "For their accumulated pluralities and non-residence, spending, you say, most of their time, not amongst their Parishioners, but at some places of idle amusement, while their flocks are left to the care of hirelings ill-requited for their labours." I imagine you are right, Sir, in fearing you have spoken these things "at the hazard of your own welfare." Dr. T., the Heads of Houses and Dignitaries of the Church, I conjecture, will not thank you for
your

your interference in this matter, nor be " in any
 " great haste," (as a friend of mine expresses it)
 " to get the Episcopal Crosier conferred on one
 " who makes such an indiscriminate use of his
 " Curatical Staff, fustigating his friends, as well
 " as his enemies, and dealing his unmerciful
 " blows around him with such force as to make
 " Arch-deacons, Rectors, Vicars and Curates,
 " reel through the streets like a company of
 " drunken Bacchanalians."

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
 Tempus eget.

But to return. Let any one compare what I was compelled, in our own justification, to advance in my Letters respecting the manner in which the Clergy are usually bred and educated for the ministry, with the above named particulars which you, a son of the Church, and acquainted with all the secrets of the family, have told out to the world, and then say which of us have reviled the Clergy? When I asserted (p. 18. of my Letters, 1st Edit.) that "it is not our custom to meddle with the Clergy," I meant precisely what I said, and said only what is true. It is not our custom, Sir, and you have not offered the shadow of a proof that it is, to meddle with them, or to take any notice of them at all, unless at all opportunities to attend their ministrations. We simply and quietly go on our own way, without troubling ourselves with others. "But this declaration, you say, seems to you rather vague in its meaning, and, in whatever sense you take it, it is, you affirm, *not founded in truth.*" This, Sir, methinks, looks like giving me the lie! and what you say in the preceding sentence, where you charge me with ad-

vancing "*trash and falsehood*," seems to wear the same aspect. I fear you will sometimes take those liberties with others which you will not suffer others to use with you.

But how do you make it appear that I assert *trash and falsehood*, when I affirm that "it is not our custom to meddle with the Clergy?" Why, you say "that you do meddle with those duties which belong to the Priestly office, I have before proved." I believe, Sir, you have before proved *nothing*, that needed any proof. Did it need any proof, that we frequently expound the word of God to, and enforce it upon those that attend our ministry? that we reprove sin and call sinners to repentance? that we visit the sick and pray with and for our hearers? Now these are all duties belonging to what you term the *priestly* office. But why do we meddle with these? Why? Truly because they are *necessary, absolutely necessary* to be done by some, and the Clergy in many places cannot or will not do them. To instance in one of those duties, Sir, and a very principal one, viz. *Reproving sin*, whether in private or in public, suppose, the sin of *drunkenness*. According to the confession you yourself have just made, many of the Clergy *cannot* do this duty. "They cannot, you say, with any decency or propriety, rebuke their *church-wardens* or parishioners for reeling about the streets, lest the rebuke should be too justly retorted upon themselves." Now, Sir, thank God, we neither fear, nor have cause to fear lest any should retort upon us in this matter. We are enabled, by his grace, to keep ourselves sober. But pray, Sir, how is this "meddling with the Clergy?" Were we to do as you advise, were we to lodge informations against all, of the sacred office, that walk disorderly, as, by
your

your account, we should have work enough, so this would be meddling with them with a vengeance.

But you go on, " If you mean by not meddling with the Clergy, that it is not your custom to revile them, that assertion is no less false than the other." And are you the person, Sir, that raises so great an outcry about giving people the lie? Then, I may say to you, in the language of St. Paul, *Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself: for thou thyself that judgest doest the same things.* But how do you make it appear that my assertion is false? Why, you say, " Whenever I have known the Methodists gain a new footing in any place and enter with a view of Profelytism, (say, Sir, with a view to call sinners to repentance) or when a fresh Preacher has come among a Society of them previously formed, the general subject of the primary harangue has been a declaration of their own pious intentions, and an affectionate lamentation for the general darkness of mankind in spiritual knowledge, and therefore that they are come among them to enlighten them, to take off the film which the Devil has put upon them, which is the reason why they have so long groped about in the darkness of ungodliness, but that the heavenly powder which they will blow into their eyes, will remove this film, and they will see clearly the things which belong to their peace." Now, Sir, all this you peremptorily assert, and that, as you would have us believe, upon your own knowledge. " Whenever I have known the Methodists gain a new footing in any place; or when a fresh Preacher has come among a Society previously formed." Pray, Sir, in how many places have you known the Methodists to gain a new footing,

footing, and how many of their Preachers have you sat under on these occasions, and *when* and *where* have you heard any of them express themselves in such elegant language as you here give us? Till you inform us of these things, and specify both *time* and *place*, we will take the liberty of suspending our belief of the truth of this extraordinary story. In the mean time, Sir, be assured that all who know the Methodists, have, in this one instance, proof sufficient that little dependance is to be placed on the truth of your assertions, which however peremptory, are as ridiculous as they are unfounded.

But still I ask, how is this "reviling the Clergy?" Why, you say, "as the bulk of mankind, though not learned, are nevertheless capable of reasoning by inference—they infer from such declarations," that is from declarations *never made*, "that though the Clergy are set apart, and what is more, paid to instruct them in these essential branches of knowledge, yet that they are either blind watchmen and ignorant, or else that they are dumb dogs that cannot bark, or lazy, lying down and loving to slumber, and only looking to their gain." And pray, Sir, what inference, then, do you think they will draw from the information you have given them, respecting the behaviour of the Clergy at the Visitations? I fear they will infer from this, that you broke off your quotation from the Prophet too soon, and that you ought to have added, "*Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough:—They are Shepherds that cannot understand. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.*" To use your own words, "What you may judge of such conduct. I know

"know not, but in my opinion this is meddling
 "with the Clergy with a vengeance;" and,
 however undesigned by you, I conjecture that it
 will greatly tend to "augment the adherents to
 Methodism."

It certainly, Sir, was a most true and ingenu-
 ous confession with which you begun this 2d.
 Letter, viz. "that your head was not clear, and
 "that you were not capable of reasoning with
 "cogency." I am amazed, Sir, if you judged
 it to be your duty to refute what you call my
 "*trash and falsehood*," "that you should suppose
 "it would be an offence to the Deity to pray to
 "him for supernatural illumination and a spirit
 "of discernment," since it is manifest, that con-
 trary to the high opinion you have of yourself,
 "your natural faculties are not sufficient for the
 "purpose." If ever you should take up the pen
 again, especially on any controversial subject, I
 would advise you, not to be afraid nor ashamed
 to pray for supernatural illumination and a spirit
 of discernment, for I am sure you have need of
 a greater degree of these than you now possess.
 And I would advise you too to spend a little
 more time than you seem to have done, in the
 cultivation of your parts. You ought at least,
 Sir, to understand *Grammar*, or not pretend to
 become an Author. If a person that speaks ex-
 tempore should sometimes "give Priscian reason
 to complain of a broken head, (as you think some
 of the Methodist Preachers do) it is a *pardonable*
 fault; but for a Clergyman of the established
 Church to sit down in his Study and compose a
 book for the public inspection, and make such
 massacre of his native language as you do, is in-
 deed inexcusable. There is scarce a concord or
 rule of government in the English Language that
 you have not broken. *Participles, Adverbs and*
Adjectives,

Adjectives, you knock down in ranks, and sin against the whole group of *Moods* and *Tenses*. Certainly, Sir, till by some future publication you give us proof that you have cultivated and improved your understanding more than you yet appear to have done, you must not pretend to be any judge in Literature.

I believe you, when you say that you consider us as a people who "have only small pretensions to learning," and that, you suppose, "we can boast of but very few converts, who are far emerged from ignorance." For I presume, it was your persuasion of this which inspired you with courage to attack us. But let me tell you, Sir, if I had taken no notice of your weak and juvenile production, you would not have escaped without proper animadversion. We have in our Connexion many hundreds, not to say thousands, well able to cope with you, and expose the weakness of your argumentation. And as to our Societies in general, though composed chiefly of the labouring or lower ranks of mankind, yet they are abundantly wiser and more knowing than when they first heard us or became Members of our Societies; and I may say, too, in *divine things*, at least, much wiser than most of their neighbours in similar circumstances. And they have, at least, the *fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and they depart from evil, which is understanding*, an attainment, which, if we believe the information you have given us, too many Clergy even of the established Church have not arrived at. When any such as these, I mean such as you have described as assembling at the Visitations, are invested with the sacred office, then indeed, whatever "modern Jeroboam" (as you express it) in the Bench of Bishops might have conferred such a dignity upon them,

"are

" are Priests of the high places made of the lowest of the people." For as sin, of any kind, is the greatest degradation of a man or an angel, so of all sins *drunkenness* sinks a man the lowest.

I am glad to find you acknowledging (p. 19.) " that a man who understands only that one tongue in which he is to speak, if he be well acquainted with the Scripture, is better qualified for the Pastoral office, than the man who is a *Linguist, Philosopher* and *Logician*, but ignorant of the grand doctrines of Christianity." And I think you will allow too, that a man that is truly *pious* and *virtuous*, is in that respect, at least, better qualified for, and more surely called of God to the Pastoral office, than one that is *vicious* and *prophane*. Now, Sir, it is on this ground chiefly that I consider many of those, the validity of whose ordination you question, as being better *qualified for* and more surely *called of God* to the Pastoral office than many Clergymen of the Church of England. They give more manifest proofs of their *piety* and of their *acquaintance* with the Oracles of God. You, Sir, are a Clergyman; and I presume have no doubt of your being lawfully invested with the Pastoral office. But give me leave to say, I much doubt whether you have been yet called of God to it. For, on the one hand, you give us great reason to suspect your piety, and on the other, your knowledge of the Scriptures. The 2d. and 6th. pages of your Pamphlet give us no very favourable idea of your *gravity* and *meekness of wisdom*, while the high conceit you have of your own " natural faculties," and your supposing " it would be an offence to the Deity to pray to him for supernatural illumination and a spirit of discernment," when discussing subjects of such great moment, make us doubt whether you have yet

yet attained any measure of that *self-knowledge* and *faith towards God*, without which piety is but a name.

But independently of this, you betray great ignorance of those divine Oracles you undertake to explain, and of that evangelical dispensation, of which you profess to be a Minister. To instance in two very important points. You every where write as though there were, strictly speaking, *Priests* under the *New-Testament* dispensation, and the ministers of the Gospel were those *Priests*. Hence you carry us back to the *Levitical Priest-hood* (p. 21. and 22) that we may learn thence how men are to be *called to* and *invested with* the sacred office of *feeding* and *overseeing* the flock of Christ; and even refer us to the 7th Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews for a confirmation of your sentiments on this head. Now Sir, you might, with full as much propriety, have referred us to the first Chapter of Genesis. The 7th Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews says not one word about the subject to which you suppose it refers: it relates to the *Priest-hood of Christ* and that *only*. And let me tell you, Sir, a truth, and a most important truth, of which, nevertheless, you seem to be entirely ignorant. Under the Christian dispensation there is *no Priest* but *Christ*, and it is of his Priesthood *only* that that of Aaron was typical. I challenge you, Sir, or any man to produce *one single text*, out of the New Testament, which gives *any*, the *least* hint that the Ministers of the Gospel, strictly speaking, are to be considered as *Priests*. They are every where spoken of under another character, viz. as *Ministers of Christ*, and *Stewards of the mysteries of God*, appointed, not to make atonement for the sins of the people (which was the office of the Priests, but to instruct, rebuke, exhort

hort and watch over them in love as those that must give an account. So that your whole argument from the Levitical priesthood falls to the ground, as an imaginary fabric erected without a foundation.

Another instance of your marvellous want of acquaintance with the Scriptures, is your every where taking it for granted that, in the Epistles of St. Paul, and the other Apostles, *Bishops* are represented as an Order above *Elders*, and indeed the *highest* Order in the Church. "*Timothy* and "*Titus*, you say, p. 24, were both of them *Bishops*, the one over the Church at Ephesus and the other over that at Crete. By virtue of their office as being of the highest sacerdotal dignity, they were authorized to send out other Labourers for the Christian harvest: but we have no proof that this power was communicated by either of them, or any other *Bishop* indiscriminately, to those *Elders* whom they ordained, but was a privilege confined solely to each *Bishop* in his own province, till he went the way of all flesh—and then one of the *Elders*, no doubt, was elected in his place, and thus a regular and duly authorized Priesthood, has been continued down to the present day."

Now, Sir, in all this, you talk without book. You speak entirely of your own head, and that not only *without* any countenance from Scripture, but in express contradiction to repeated testimonies of it, and to the judgment of "the first English Reformers, who according to *Moses*, admitted but two Orders of Church officers to be of *divine appointment*, viz. *Bishops* and *Deacons*; a *Presbyter* and a *Bishop*, according to them, being but two names for the same office." This indeed is evident to a

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demonstration from sundry passages of the New Testament, two or three of which I shall here adduce. In the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where we have an account of St. Paul's solemn charge delivered to the *Elders* of the Church of Ephesus, met together at *Miletus*, we find him denominating them all, without exception, *Overseers* or *Bishops*, (ἐπίσκοποι) and affirming that *the Holy Ghost had made them such over his flock*. And it appears from Acts xiv. 23. that they were such as they ordained in every Church. Nor was there any other order of men employed as *Pastors*, under the Apostles and Evangelists, than this, in the *first churches*, unless we except the *Deacons*, who were properly no more than *Stewards*, entrusted with the management of their temporal matters, and certainly did not preach by virtue of that office. This appears evident from Phil. i. 1. where we read, *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons*. Here, Sir, the Church at Philippi is represented as comprizing only the *saints*, that is, the believers in general, and the *Bishops* and *Deacons*. Now if there were another order, as you suppose, distinct from both, viz. that of *Elders* who were not *Bishops*, how happens it that no notice is taken of it? That there was no such thing in the Apostolic Churches, is further manifest from the 1st Epistle of Peter chap. v. 1, 3. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort*, says Peter, *who also am an Elder; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, ἐπισκοπῶντες, literally discharging the office of Bishops, or Overseers*. This is still further certain from that passage of the Epistle to Titus already quoted: "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest—ordain

dain Elders in every city. If any be blameless, &c. for a Bishop must be blameless, &c. Here, Sir, you see again that the terms *Elder* and *Bishop* were used by the Apostles indifferently.

In this point, therefore, you shew that you are but little acquainted with the Scriptures. And as to "*Timothy* and *Titus* being both of them "*Bishops*, the one over the Church of Ephesus "and the other over that of Crete," where do you find this appellation given them in the New Testament, unless in notes subjoined to the latter Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, which, you know, are of no authority. It is certain they did not staidly reside in those places. They were only sent to them for a time with a view to make certain regulations in the Churches. They were rather *Evangelists* than *Bishops*, an order in that age which you overlook, but which is particularly mentioned Eph. iv. 11. These were *Itinerants*, and travelled to and fro, at the command and under the direction of the Apostles, partly with a view to *plant* Churches, and partly to *water* those already planted, as also to make such regulations as the Apostles thought necessary or proper to be made. And you seem entirely to have forgot, what cuts your whole doctrine up by the roots, that the former of these persons, Timothy (and if he why not Titus also?) was ordained by those very *Elders*, who, you are very confident, were of an order quite inferior and never ordained any. *Neglect not*, says St. Paul, (1 Tim. iv. 14.) *the gift that is in thee* (*τὸ ἐν σοὶ χάρισμα*;) the gift of grace, meaning, undoubtedly, either the *office itself* to which he was graciously called, or *his qualification for it* which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. These Prel-

byters or Elders, therefore, ordained Timothy, who ordained other *Elders* or *Bishops*!

But what are we to infer from all this? Why, that *Ordination* with them was a very different thing from what it is with you. It was, as I said in my Letters, neither more nor less than "the setting apart of persons, properly called and qualified, for the purpose of *overseeing* and "feeding the flock of Christ." And it mattered little, nay nothing, by whom this was done, whether by an *Apostle*, *Evangelist*, or *Elder*, if it were but done by those that were *proper judges*, were the true Servants of Christ and already in the same Ministry, having been formerly set apart for the same office by others. And this point, Sir, I am ready to dispute with you whenever you please.

What therefore renders any man's Ordination not *valid*, or, which is the same, *null* and *void*, is 1st. and principally his not being *properly qualified*, either through want of *piety*, *knowledge*, or other necessary ministerial *gifts* for the office. 2dly, His not being *properly called*. I chiefly mean of *God*, by what the Church of England terms the *motion*, or influence of the *Holy Ghost*. And 3dly, his not being *properly set apart* for the work; the persons who take this upon them; either not being proper judges what qualifications are necessary, or not being already in the same office. Now, Sir, it is on the *first* and *second* of these accounts, that I object to the *validity* of *your* Ordination. It appears to me, that you are not *properly qualified* for, nor *called* to it, as being sadly wanting both in *piety* and *knowledge*.

St. Paul, in giving directions to Timothy, respecting this matter, expressly prohibits him from ordaining a *Striker*, and you, by your own confession, are such. He requires also, as we saw

saw above, that the person should be *blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, not covetous, not a bratoler, but patient, and not a novice, no proselyte, a young convert, lest* (says he) *being puffed up* (with a notion of his own great abilities) *he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.* Now, Sir, how far you answer this character your friends and neighbours know better than I. Only this I will say, the things you have advanced and the manner in which you have expressed yourself, in this your first publication, have made me strongly suspect, that you are, I will not say a *novice* or young convert, but no scriptural convert at all, I mean not *born from above, not created anew in Christ Jesus.* But be this as it will, I have plainly manifested that you are unacquainted with the Scriptures, in some very capital points, and this, of itself, is a sufficient proof of your want of ability for your office. Now if you be not *qualified*, you cannot be *called.* God never *moves* any man to take upon him this sacred office that is not qualified for it. For he cannot contradict himself, and first prohibit a man from an office, by withholding the proper qualifications, and then call him to it. So that you may amuse and divert yourself as you please, Sir; with questioning the validity of the ordinations of the *Methodist Preachers*, and what is yet more strange and ridiculous, those of the various bodies of *Dissenters* in this Kingdom, and of the Reformed Churches, in Scotland, in *Holland*, in *America*, and divers other parts of the earth: but it would better become you to reflect upon yourself and ask your own heart whether you spoke *the truth*, when you solemnly affirmed before the Bishop, that

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, you

you "trusted you were moved by the Holy Ghost to
"take upon you that office and ministry?"

And, now, Sir, I would here drop the subject of Ordination entirely, as having said sufficient upon it perfectly to overthrow your baseless fabric, were it not that a few of your *Hints*, as you call them, are so extremely singular and extraordinary, not to say ridiculous, that they deserve to be dragged into a farther light, than that in which they stand in your Pamphlet, that they may meet with that contempt which they merit. I had said in my Letters, what, not partiality to the Dissenters, but *reason* and *truth* extorted from me, "that the ordinations of the
"various bodies of Dissenters, in this kingdom,
"are as solemn in themselves and as effectual to
"every purpose of sacred service in the Church
"of Christ, as those of the Ministers that are
"episcopally ordained." On this you observe,
"That they may be performed with as much solemnity and decency I do not deny: but that
"is but the ceremonial part of the business:
"the important point is how far they are conformable to the Scriptures, and if they are
"authorized to use such ceremonials." Sir, I spoke not of the *ceremonial part* of the business at all: but *wholly* of the *spirit* and *nature* of it. I spoke only of "*setting apart*, for the purpose
"of *overseeing* and *feeding* the flock of Christ,
"persons *properly qualified* and *called*, by such
"as are *proper judges* and are themselves in the
"Ministry." Now, Sir, do you call *this* the ceremonial part of the business? The ceremonial part of the business, is, whether the person, that performs the office of *ordaining*, have the name of a *Bishop*, and appear in, what you call "mitred supremacy," and "lawn-sleeves," or whether he be simply termed an *Elder*, *Pastor*,
Minister,

Minister, or Preacher, and be habited in a black-gown, a white-surplice, or merely in a plain coat of black, brown, or any other colour. This, Sir, according to Scripture, reason, common sense, and the usage of the primitive church, is the ceremonial part of the business, and of no kind of consequence whatever.

And there is another thing too, which, though generally used by the Apostles, Evangelists and Pastors of the first churches, yet must be ranked under the same head, and that is *the imposition of hands*. Even this, Sir, is not *essential* to the ordination or appointment of *Pastors* to watch over the flock of Christ. Paul and Barnabas had preached long before they received that ceremony at all, as appears from divers parts of the Acts of the Apostles, especially from chap. xiii. 1—3. And many others, such as *Stephen, Philip, Silas, and Apollos*, probably never had it, I mean for the purpose of setting them apart to preach the Gospel, otherwise I know the two former, among divers others who never preached, were appointed to a temporal office, viz. that of *Deacons, or Stewards*, by imposition of hands. But you, Sir, overlooking what is essential in this work, the setting apart for it persons *properly qualified and called*, dwell altogether on what is circumstantial, and if the person *ordained* be ever so *ignorant and wicked*, and if the person *ordaining* be *ignorant and wicked* too, if he be no judge of the qualifications requisite in a Candidate, nor be able to distinguish a *sheep* of Christ from a *goat*; if he be neither *called of God* to, nor *countenanced in* such an office; yet it is with you a proper ordination if it be performed by one that has obtained “*mitred supremacy*,” and wears “*lawn sleeves*.” Nay, you assure us “*your opinion is, that those Orders given by a Roman Catholic Bishop,*

" *Bishop*, are equally valid with those that are " given by a *Protestant Bishop*," as being, what you call *Episcopal*, although the Church of Rome is represented in the Scriptures as the MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH, and an *Apostate* from the true faith of Christ and pure worship of God. (See Rev. xiii. 17. and 2 Thess. ii. 3.) But, to use your own language (p. 26.) " *A turbid fountain cannot send forth limpid waters.*"

In the mean time, you " flatly deny the sufficiency of Orders conferred by Dissenters of " every denomination," and that for this curious reason: " None of the institutors of Sects, you " say, had attained Episcopal dignity." Thus with one stroke of your pen, you unchristian all the Churches of the *Protestant Dissenters* in England and Ireland, the Churches of Scotland and the *Reformed Churches* abroad, whether in Holland, Switzerland, or America. But, Sir, I have shewn you that whoever has attained the *dignity* (to use your own expression,) of a *Presbyter* or *Elder*, has also obtained that of an *Overseer* or *Bishop*, of the flock of Christ, and disprove it if you can. Therefore although " James Arminius " and others of the same party never arrived at " *initred supremacy*," and although " John Wesley never attained lawn sleeves," as you express yourself, yet they might be endued with as much authority, from God, to appoint persons to go forth and call sinners to repentance, as the *Mitred Bishops* that ordained you, and such gentlemen as you have described page the 14th of your Pamphlet, and as much fruit may have arisen or may arise from the labours of the former as of the latter. What fruit there may be of your labours, and of the labours of such *reeling* brethren I cannot say. How many lost sinners you have been instrumental

instrumental in bringing to repentance is best known, I will not say to *yourselves*, (for I fear you make little enquiry about it) but to *God*. But one thing I know, The good done by the Preachers sent out by Mr. Wesley is so apparent and undeniable, that *you yourself*, an enemy as you confessedly are, cannot help acknowledging it.

" Before I conclude, (you say p. 44.) I must pay that tribute of approbation to the Methodists" (whom p. 26, and 27. you had termed a deluded people) " to which I really think they are entitled, and that is, that they certainly have been instrumental to produce a reformation in the morals of many profligate characters (particularly in populous neighbourhoods) by giving them a knowledge of those scriptural truths, of which they had otherwise remained ignorant; and so far it must be confessed they have improved the face of Society." Thank you, Sir. This abundantly outweighs all you have said against us. This shews, that whatever you may think of our *mission*, it has the approbation and seal of heaven. It is true, this is a small, a very small part of the truth: but let it be observed, it is the confession of an *enemy*, an *acknowledged enemy*, and a confession, which, though he was reluctant to give it, notorious facts extorted from him. It therefore goes a *great way*, and must be considered as an important testimony to, at least, a part of the truth, and a testimony that is a sufficient confutation of your whole Pamphlet.

Of this you were apprehensive, and therefore entered a *caveat* against it. " It may be represented to mankind you say, (ibid.) that if this be admitted by the enemies of Methodism, it is a tacit, however unwilling, acknowledgment
" that

" that the Methodist Teachers are not only
 " useful, but necessary and commendable. But
 " this I deny: and, in support of my opinion
 " beg leave to refer these *self-ordained*, theolo-
 " gical Instructors to the consideration of these
 " few words in the 1st. verse of the 2d. (you
 " mean the 6th.) chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to
 " the Romans. *Shall we continue in sin that*
 " *grace may abound.*" Your argument runs
 thus. " The Methodists have certainly been
 " instrumental in producing a reformation in
 " many profligate characters by giving them a
 " knowledge of those scriptural truths of which
 " they had otherwise remained ignorant:" there-
 fore I pay them that tribute of approbation to
 which they are entitled. But St. Paul says,
Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?
 therefore, I deny that they are either necessary or
 commendable. I really think, Sir, if you pro-
 ceed a little further, I shall have *another* reason
 to give why you want the qualifications necessary
 for a minister of the Gospel, and therefore were
 never called of God to that office. I fear you
 will prove yourself wanting in *common sense*.

Your manner of arguing reminds me of the
 observation made by a gentleman, the other day,
 upon perusing your Pamphlet. " Mr. Russel,
 " said he, puts me in mind of Asael pursuing
 " Abner. His heels are better than his head."
 You may read the story in the 2d. Book of Sa-
 muel v. 19—23. and I hope it will be a caution
 to you not to undertake hereafter what is above
 your strength. However be not overmuch
 afraid. I will shew you more mercy than Ab-
 ner shewed that inconsiderate and imprudent
 youth. I will not kill you quite: at least not at
this time. But if your rashness and mistaken
 zeal carry you much further, I will not be an-
 swerable

swerable for the consequences. Therefore take warning in time. The advice of Horace in this case is excellent and well worthy your attention.

*Sumite materiam, vestris, qui scribitis æquam,
Viribus : & versate diu, quid ferre recusent
Quid valeant humeri : cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.*

But to return, as some of my readers may suppose that I deal unfairly with you, and that you never could be so unwise as to argue from Rom. vi. 1, against its being right and commendable for the Methodist Preachers to go on " reforming profligate characters and contributing to improve the face of Society," which you confess they have been instrumental in doing; I will suffer you to explain yourself a little further, and unfold still more your great skill in the art of reasoning. The sense you put upon St. Paul's words is new and singular. " No man, you say, should continue *in the sin of Schism*, or of unlawfully assuming the pastoral office, merely that the *grace* of spiritual knowledge may be diffused by him among the people." For " With whatever ardent zeal some men may pretend to a regard for the everlasting welfare of their fellow creatures, you think, no person who is in his right senses, would *ensure*, or even *hazard* his own damnation, on purpose to be conducive to the salvation of others." I wonder, Sir, you did not rather quote Rom. iii. 8. where the Apostle denies the lawfulness of *doing evil that good may come*, and affirms that the damnation of those, that hold such a doctrine, is just. I fear your *Hints* will not see a 2d. Edition, otherwise I would advise you to substitute *this text* instead of the other, as being abundantly more to your purpose.

But

But let me ask you, Sir, where you learned
 that a man might "ensure or even hazard so
 "tremendous a fate, as his own damnation, by
 "being conducive to the salvation of others."
 It is quite a new doctrine to me. I have always
 been taught to believe that there was more danger
 of ensuring this tremendous fate by *neglecting* and
obstructing, than by *attending to* and *promoting*
 the salvation of others. And I have always
 thought too, that it was lawful for any one, that,
 through the divine blessing, might be able to ac-
 complish it, to turn another from the error of his
 ways, even as any one that is able, is at liberty
 to preserve life or rescue persons from drowning.
 But you, in effect, say 'if the people are so mad
 'that they will drown themselves, let them. It
 'is their own fault.' Your words, immediately
 following the above curious quotation from
 Rom. vi. 1. (p. 45.) are, "Though the zeal of
 "some of the established Ministers, who are
 "placed in populous parishes, *may not* have
 "penetrated into those remote corners, where
 "the Methodists have found a way, yet the Pas-
 "tors of the establishment are not the only per-
 "sons to be blamed on this account. The people
 "themselves are in the fault. They need not
 "*perish through lack of knowledge*, but if they
 "will seek for the knowledge of their duty,
 "they have means put into their power to attain
 "it." This, Sir, is exactly as if you had said,
 'Though the diligence of some of the Physicians,
 'who are placed in populous Towns, may not
 'lead them to penetrate into those remote cor-
 'ners, where the members and friends of the
 'Humane Society are rescuing many of his Ma-
 'jesty's subjects from drowning, yet the Gentle-
 'men of the Faculty are not the only persons to
 'be blamed on this account. The people them-
 'selves

'selves are in the fault. They need not perish by water. If they will but keep at a distance and not *fall or throw themselves* in, they will be sufficiently safe.'

You go on, "They have throughout the kingdom a regular ministry of the word preached, and under that they may profit, if they have a disposition to encrease in holiness." But, in the mean time, Sir, what are they to do, who happen to be situated in parishes where there are such ministers as you have described p. 14? And what must become of them who have *not* such a disposition, a disposition, which, if *man's heart be evil from his youth up*, see Gen. vi. 5. and viii. 21. I may venture to say *none* have without supernatural grace? What must become of them? You tell us. "If they have not (that disposition) but are determined to continue in ignorance, and follow the ways of sin," (in which, by the by, their *Shepherds* go before them) "their destruction is of themselves, and through their own perverseness," or the ignorance, sloth or bad example, say, of those appointed to lead and watch over them, "they must perish accordingly." In other words, *The blind lead the blind, and they together fall into the ditch*, and in the ditch let them lie and perish together, rather than that these *self-ordained* theological Instructors, should continue to commit the sin of *Schism*, either by helping them out or using any means to prevent their falling in! You will remember, however, that you have not yet proved "the reforming profligate characters," or in St. James's more just and significant language, *the converting a sinner from the error of his ways*, to be *schism* or *heresy*.

Ah! Sir, how different is the spirit manifested in the above passages from that of him, whose

servant and follower you profess to be! Who *laid down his life for the sheep*, and who, as the Evangelists often inform us, *had compassion on the multitudes, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep that had no shepherd!* I am disposed to spare you or I could here find an argument much more forcible than any I mentioned before, why you never ought to have been made a *Shepherd of souls*. You want *compassion for and love to them*; and but too manifestly shew the *wisdom and propriety* of our Lord's observation, that the *Hireling careth not for the sheep*. Leaving you to reflect, Sir, upon the inconsistency of your reasoning and the impropriety of your conduct, I again subscribe myself, Rev. Sir, your well-wisher in Christ,

JOSEPH BENSON.

L E T T E R V.

REV. SIR,

ALTHOUGH I have already answered every thing in your Remarks that deserves notice, and that much more at large than I at first intended, and therefore might well be excused, if I here put a period to my reply; yet, as you have thrown out divers unkind hints, which however improbable and groundless, may be improved, if suffered to pass unnoticed, by our enemies, to the prejudice of that blessed work of reformation, which, you yourself have been constrained to acknowledge, the Methodists have been instrumental in effecting in this land, I shall therefore

therefore spend a few more pages in refuting the most material of them.

" The next object of my investigation, you observe, p. 29. is your *Loyalty* and professions of attachment to the Government. That you are either averse to kingly government in general, (as some of the Dissenters are well known to be) or have any personal antipathy to our present most gracious Sovereign, in particular, is what I dare not assert; and for ought I know to the contrary you may be firm friends to the form of government now established in this kingdom, as you profess." Why then, in the name of reason and religion, do you throw out insinuations to the contrary? Where is the love that *ελεγχεται κακοις* that *thinketh, suspecteth, or inferreth no evil*, where none appears? But " Certainly, you say, you give some room to question your attachment." What, Sir, although " for ought you know to the contrary we may be firm friends to the Government?" This is one of your many inconsistencies.

But proceed and tell us what room we have given to question our attachment to the Government? " You inform us, you say, that one of the Minutes of your Conference, last year, was that none of you should, either in writing or conversation speak lightly or irreverently of the Government under which he lives." And pray, Sir, how does this prove that " we have given room to question our attachment?" I supposed, especially, as it was a public Act, done, in effect, by our *whole body*, it fully proved the *reverse* of what you insinuate, and left *no room* for suspicion *whatever*. But you say, " There is a kind of *Jesuitical* reserve in a word of this sentence." I will venture to say, Sir,

that you are the first person who found this out : and it is an invention worthy of your "spruce head." "What do you mean (you go on) by "the word *Government*?" We mean, Sir, what every body else means by it; *The higher, or ruling, civil Powers* in this or any other nation where divine Providence may have cast our lot. As to *this* kingdom, we mean the *form of Government established amongst us*, consisting of *King, Lords, and Commons*.

But you say p. 30. "if you include every branch of it, I think you need not be told that the Clergy have been deemed in every wise Legislature as the *first and most important* branch that shoots from this trunk." From what trunk, Sir, the trunk of Government? Of this you were speaking, and of this it is most natural to understand you, your meaning therefore is 'The Government, consisting of *King, Lords, and Commons*, is a Trunk out of which grow divers branches. The *first and most important* of these branches is *the Clergy*.' It appears by this, Sir, that, strictly speaking, the *Clergy* are not a part of what you call "the trunk of Government," but only a branch growing therefrom? Or, if you speak more at large, and fix no particular idea to the word *trunk*, but consider the Government, as consisting of *three* grand branches, united, some way, in one root, then you affirm, 1st, that the Clergy are the *first and most important* branch of the government, and 2^{dly}, that they have been deemed such in every wise legislature. Now, Sir, if this latter be your meaning, then I must utterly deny both parts of your proposition. The Clergy are not "the *first and most important* branch of the Civil Government, established in this kingdom;" but the *King* is that branch: and I deny 2^{dly},
that

that they are "deemed such by every wise legislator," unless you can prove that *ours* is a foolish one. If the former be your meaning, if the Clergy be but a *branch*, growing from the trunk of Government, then, for any thing that you advance to the contrary, that trunk might remain *entire* even supposing that this branch should prove so *rotten* as *all*, or *some part* of it, to fall off. Perhaps there might be virtue enough in the *stock* to emit *other* and more *sound* branches.

But proceed, Sir, in your argument, and shew that we have given room to question our attachment to Government. "If you have not prated against us, (you say) with malicious words have you not written against us? Have you not lifted up the slanderous weapon to wound this important branch?" viz. the Clergy. The *slanderous weapon*? No Sir, I defy you or any man to shew that I have said a syllable *more* than is true. I knew, Sir, that the Bishops sit in the *House of Lords*, and that, in conjunction with the *Peers* of the Realm, they are one of the *three* branches of Government; but I never knew nor heard before that the *Arch-deacons*, *Deans*, *Rectors*, *Vicars* and *Curates*, and among the rest, the *Curate of Pexshore* were all branches of the Legislature, and Government of this Land, and that for any man to intimate, that some are admitted into and continued in *their* Order, who are not so *holy* as the sacred office requires, is to write against the Government and "lift up a slanderous weapon to wound a branch" of it. I fear, Sir, as being you think the *first* and *most* important branch of the Government, you want to enjoy a privilege which none of the other branches enjoy or wish for, and that is, the privilege of *disgracing*

your profession by an *ungodly* and *wicked* life, and yet that your characters should be accounted so sacred that no man shall be permitted to insinuate that you do evil. And, no wonder, for, by your own confession, you have your Orders from *Rome*, where the Clergy have long been accounted *inviolable*.

But, Sir, I can easily settle this point with you. When you have shewn us that your informing the nation that at the *Visitations* "the Clergy eat and drink so far beyond the bounds of temperance, that they cannot with any decency or propriety rebuke their Church-Wardens and Parishioners for reeling about the streets, lest the rebuke should be too justly retorted upon themselves," is not writing against the *Government*, then will I also, in my turn, shew you how nothing I have advanced can be construed in that light. But "in plain terms you say (p. 31.) have you not vilified and traduced a respectable body of men?" No, Sir, not at all. Some of them, if we believe you, traduce and vilify themselves, and that to such a degree that they are ashamed to do one of the most important parts of their duty; they are ashamed to reprove their drunken *Church-Wardens* and *Parishioners*; but I have not traduced and vilified them. But have you not represented them to the world, as a "class, the great majority of whom do not feel inwardly that love for a crucified Saviour which the Society of Methodists do find working in their hearts." This, Sir, is your *own* elegant language: it is not *mine*, as may easily be seen by turning to the 44th page of my Letters, 1st. Edition, to which you refer us for a proof of the truth of your observation. And is this, Sir, the best proof you can produce of my vilifying and traducing the Clergy?

Clergy? Then how innocent am I in comparison of you? especially considering the honourable testimony I repeatedly bear to the *knowledge, piety and virtue* of many in different parts of the kingdom!

But "you accuse the doctor with exciting a Mob," accuse him *with* exciting! Poor Priscian! how this "modern young Cleric" breaks thy Head again! I presume, Sir, you mean "I accuse him of exciting a Mob." Certainly, Sir, the mob rose in consequence of his preaching his Sermon in several of the Churches of Oxford And let him deny it who can. But "certainly" you say, you sometimes throw off the sanctity of your character, or you would never utter "expressions which a drunken Bargeman would not have the audacity to assert." Sanctity of character, as you express it, however it may be with you, is not with me an endowment which can be *put off and on*, at pleasure. "He (you are sure) would not have called the Clergy (you mean the *drunken Clergy*) Servants of the Devil." Perhaps not: in calling *them* so, he would have called *himself* so. But where have I called the Clergy *Servants of the Devil*? Certainly not in p. the 26th, to which you refer, nor in any other part of my Book. But you say, "if not in express words yet certainly by implication." Nay, Sir, if *this* be all, then you are as deep in the mud, as the Proverb is, as I am in the mire. For if *he that committeth sin be of the Devil, as St. John testifies*, and if, *his servants we be whom we obey, as St. Paul declares*, and *those be of their Father the Devil who do his works*, as Jesus Christ bears witness, then whose servants have you called them, who have placed them before our eyes, high and low, young and old, one with another, as reeling through the streets among their

their drunken *Church-Wardens* and *Parishioners*? and whose servant have you represented *yourself* to be where you declare you will knock a man down that gives you the *lie*? Not the servant of *him*, I presume, who says, *If any man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also.*

But I object (you say) to that dictatorial spirit which instead of modestly stating your opinion, assumes the imperious language of the unsubdued mind that is fond of power, and says, "Go from place to place and preach as they do." I am not afraid, Sir, lest any unprejudiced person, who is at all acquainted with the various figures of speech, and who reads those and such like expressions in connection with the context, should suppose they proceeded from a *dictatorial Spirit*. Indeed I was not *dictating* at all. I was only putting Dr. T——, you and other enemies of the Methodists, into a way to effect, what you have so much at heart, viz. to stop their further progress. If you would do this, I say, *Go forth and preach as they do.* But "I here, you say, express my abhorrence both of the *manner and matter* of this sentence," a sentence, however, which, both as to the *manner and matter* of it, is closely connected with, and indeed makes a part of "the very excellent Counsel," as you term it, which a little after (p. 35.) you say, I have "given the Clergy, for enabling them to the effectual discharge of that vocation, whereunto they are called." Here, however, you express your abhorrence both of the matter and manner of it! And why? I fear, because it comes too close to your heart, and reproaches you for your *indolence* and *slloth* in the sacred work of saving souls.

You go on (p. 33.) "Itinerant Preaching is neither requisite nor proper, in any country
" where

" where Christianity is the established Religion." You mean, I presume, Sir, *where people are Christians by an act of the Legislature!* But where is that country? In what quarter of the globe does it lie? Is it in the *torrid*, in the *frigid*, or in one of the *temperate Zones*? Where is the place where *repentance, faith, and holiness*, the *mind of Christ* and *image of God*, in other words, *Christianity*, is established by the Government, and people *universally or generally* love God and their neighbours, and *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called*, by virtue of Acts of Parliament? Ah, Sir, here you manifest that you have read my Letters, and what is more, have read the *Liturgy, Articles and Homilies* of our Church, nay and even the *Scriptures* to little purpose. You know not yet what Christianity is! You have not yet learned that *if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. Christianity the established religion!* Alas, Sir, it is yet but poorly established, if we believe the account you have given of the conduct of its prime Ministers, even when they assemble together to consult about its interests!

You go on, " It may indeed be both necessary and expedient in those parts of the Globe which be in darkness, and where we wish to disseminate the seeds of the Gospel." Then, Sir, it is necessary in *England*, which, according to what you, yourself, have more than once confessed, lies in darkness, if *sin or ignorance* be darkness. " But, you proceed, where the fostering hand of power hath cherished its growth, till its branches cover the land;" that is, till *wisdom, piety and virtue*; till *faith, hope, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness and temperance*; till *holiness and happiness* cover the land: " there it does not want the

" care

"care and skill of the itinerant husbandman," True, Sir, but where is that happy nation? Pray do you know a *City, Town, Parish,* or even *Village* in the Kingdom where this is the case? If you do and will point it out, I will allow that "the regular Servants of the Vineyard," (as you term the Clergy of the established Church) "may" "be sufficient to manage and culture the Vine," in that place. But observe they must not be such as you have described, p. 14. who eat and drink with the drunken and reel through the streets like Bacchanalians. These, Sir, are not the "regular servants of the Vineyard," but very *irregular* ones, who have not entered in at the right door, but have climbed over the wall, (I mean who have entered into the sacred office without Christ's permission or authority) not with a view to "culture the Vine," but to eat the *grapes* and drink themselves drunk with the *wine*.

I am glad, Sir, that you are obliged to confess that "the mode of conveying the knowledge of" "Christ by itinerant Preaching is in conformity" "to the practice of the Apostolic Teachers, who" "went about preaching the Gospel from city to" "city,—confirming the souls of the disciples and" "exhorting them to continue in the faith, Acts" "xiv. 22." By this you see, Sir, that they travelled from place to place, not only to sow the *first seeds* of Gospel truth, and *plant* the vine of Christianity, but also to *water* what was planted. "But (p. 34.) if this preaching from place to" "place had been an essential part of the Gospel" "ministry." Did I say it was? Certainly I did not. Many things may be *expedient and useful*, which are not *essential*, or absolutely necessary. (You go on) "and to continue throughout" "all ages, it is unaccountable to me that almost" "all

“ all those pious and learned men who *have* lived
 “ (you should say, who *lived*) during the last 15
 “ or 16 Centuries, should never have been of
 “ that opinion and acted (you mean again, *not*
 “ have acted) accordingly.” To say nothing of
 the ancient Fathers, many in Europe, since the
 light of the Reformation dawned, *did* travel from
place to place, yea from *country to country*, to
 diffuse the knowledge of Christ crucified. I only
 mentioned one of the most eminent of these, viz.,
 Mr. Bernard Gilpin, in my letters to Dr. T— ;
 but divers others of the Reformers, both at home
 and abroad might be named as examples, more
 or less remarkable, of the same kind.

Nay, even among the Members of the Church
 of Rome, itinerant preaching is encouraged and
 frequently practised in foreign parts. Mr. Flet-
 cher mentions *one* instance of this kind in a
 Letter dated Nyon, Sept. 25, 1778, and addressed
 to James Ireland, Esq; (See Posthumous Pieces
 of the late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, published by the
 Rev. Melvill Horne, p. 226.) “ Passing through
 a pari of the vale (says he) which belongs to the
 King of France, I saw a prodigious concourse of
 people, and supposed they kept a fair, but was
 agreeably surprized to find it was three Missiona-
 ries who went about, as itinerant preachers, to
 help the regular Clergy. They had been there
 already some days, and were three brothers, who
 preached morning and evening. The evening
 service opened by what they call a *Conference*.
 One of the Missionaries took the pulpit, and the
 Parish Priest proposed questions to him, which
 he answered at full length and in a very edifying
 manner. — The method was admirably well calcu-
 lated to draw and fix the attention of a mixed
 multitude. This conference being ended, ano-
 ther Missionary took the pulpit. His text was
 our

our Lord's description of the day of Judgment. Before the sermon, all those who, for the press, could kneel, did, and sung a French Hymn to beg a blessing upon the word; and indeed it was blessed. An awful attention was visible upon most, and for a good part of the discourse, the voice of the Preacher was almost lost in the cries and bitter wailings of the audience. I have seen but once or twice congregations as much affected in England."

You see by this quotation, Sir, from one of his Letters, that Mr. Fletcher was no enemy to *field or itinerant Preaching*. You however, unhappily for your cause, have thought proper to produce him as such. "Beyond all doubt, you say, many have been as well qualified for such labours, as *John Wesley*, or any of his Society. Of many instances that might be enumerated, I shall adduce only one, of a modern date, and that was the truly pious John Fletcher of *Madeley in Shropshire*." The most improper choice you could have made. Mr. Fletcher preached in private houses in all parts of his own and neighbouring Parishes, where he could gain access; received the Methodist Preachers to lodge and preach in his house regularly once a fortnight or oftener: built a *Preaching-house*, to be occupied by himself and them conjointly, in *Madeley-wood*, and preached in the private houses and Chapels of the Methodists throughout the kingdom, wherever he came, and that during the whole time that intervened between his first taking Orders and his death. Nay, and what is more, kept private meetings for christian conversation and prayer, and formed Societies, precisely as we do.

I presume, Sir, had you known this before, you would have been more sparing in your commendations

mendations of this man of God. " The memory, " you assure us, of his virtues is now deeply engraven on the hearts of many of his Parishioners, and the consolation of his doctrine many have already experienced in their dying hours." All this is true, Sir, and abundantly more than you, probably, ever heard concerning him, or would believe if related by ever such credible witnesses : notwithstanding that " you verily believe, you say, that more sincere and genuine piety circulated through the least of his fingers, though he died young, than ever flowed through Mr. Wesley's heart, during an interval of four-score years." How far your faith in this instance may be built on a solid basis I am not sure. For how much genuine piety might circulate through the least of Mr. Fletcher's fingers, during his comparatively short life, and how much through Mr. Wesley's heart during his life of 89 years, I cannot so much as conjecture, having no certain principles to proceed upon. I can only say that, from my long acquaintance with Mr. Fletcher, and the many most *kind* and *respectful* things he was continually dropping from his lips and from his pen, respecting Mr. Wesley, I am satisfied he would not have thanked you for making the comparison.

If you wish to know his sentiments of Mr. Wesley, after a most intimate acquaintance with him for many years, read his *Checks to Antinomianism*. As you may not be able to get a sight of them soon, I will transcribe a Paragraph from the first of them, termed *The Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Minutes of the year 1770*. After assuring us p. 9. that " for above 16 years " (and this was written in 1770) he had heard " him frequently in his (Mr. Wesley's) chapels " and sometimes in his own Church, at (Madeley)

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" and

" and familiarly conversed and corresponded
 " with him, and often perused his numerous
 " works in prose and verse;" in p 96. he speaks
 as follows. " One word about Mr. Wesley and
 " I have done. Of the two greatest, and most
 " useful Ministers I ever knew, one is no more.
 " (Mr. Whitfield.) The other, after amazing
 " labours, flies still with unwearied diligence
 " through the three kingdoms, calling sinners to
 " repentance, and to the healing fountain of
 " Jesus' blood. Though oppressed with the
 " weight of near 70 years, and the care of near
 " *thirty thousand souls*, he shames still, by his
 " unabated zeal and immense labours, all the
 " young Ministers in England, perhaps in
 " Christendom. He has generally blown the
 " gospel-trump and rode 20 miles before most of
 " the Professors, who despise his labours, have
 " left their downy pillows. As he begins the
 " day, the week, the year, so he concludes them,
 " still intent upon extensive services for the glory
 " of the Redeemer and the good of souls. And
 " shall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues,
 " our hands against him? No, let them rather
 " forget their cunning. If we will quarrel, can
 " we find nobody to fall out with, but the Mi-
 " nister upon whom God puts the greatest
 " honour?"

Such is the opinion, which Mr. Fletcher,
 whom you seem so much to admire, had of him
 whom you revile as an *Enthusiast*, a person of
 an *haughty spirit*, and a *dealer in old women's*
tales (p. 34.) And I presume, Sir, Mr. Fletcher
 was as good a judge of *men and manners* as you
 are, and a little better acquainted with the *vener-*
able person, whom you, a bold youth of yester-
 day, of little learning, and, I fear of less religion,
 go out of your way to make a blow at, because,
 forsooth,

forsooth, he is now dead, and you think you can abuse him with safety. But, Sir, Mr. Wesley had friends that loved him, and a sufficient number of them remain alive to chastise such insolence as yours. But to return. " He (you say, Mr. Fletcher) instead of being impelled by the ambitious hopes of being a Leader of a numerous Sect, or prompted by wild enthusiastic notions of becoming a general Reformer, thought he should be fulfilling his duty in as acceptable a manner to God, by a regular, conscientious and zealous regard to the discharge of his obligations, as a *Parish Priest*, as if he compassed sea and land to make profelytes."

Mr. Fletcher, Sir, was as zealous, to the full, to make profelytes, as Mr. Wesley, and profelytes of *exactly the same kind*, and to the *same cause*, profelytes from *sin* to *righteousness*, and from *Belial* to *Christ*, and to accomplish this desirable end, left no means, whatever, untried. He, in a sense, compassed sea and land; not confining himself even to this Kingdom, or to the British dominions, but using all his endeavours to spread the Redeemer's interest in France, in Switzerland, and other parts of Europe. And if you discharge your duty as a *Parish Priest*, (to use your own unscriptural expression) I will not say as he did, for that I am sure is not to be expected from you, but in any way that bears the least resemblance, however distant, to the manner in which he discharged his, as you will be highly approved of by the Methodists, so you will not long escape being stigmatized as one yourself, and even as an *itinerant Preacher*. And as you have read, you say, the *Portrait of St. Paul*, and it appears it has made so much impression upon you, as to raise in your mind an high esteem for its Author, and as by reading my Let-

ters, you have conceived a great desire "to partake of my likeness," I am not without hopes, (for nothing is impossible with God : he is well able to open the eyes of the blind, and cause the heart of the rash to understand knowledge,) but we shall see *your* name upon the list of Methodist, itinerant Preachers, by and by.

I am the more encouraged to hope for this, as I find, in reading a little further, you highly approve of the advice I ventured to give those Clergy who wish to put a stop to the further progress of Methodism, the substance of which advice was, that they should imitate the Methodist Preachers in their *preaching* and *labours*. To this advice, however you have one objection. "From your words, (you say, p. 36.) not a doubt remains, that you mean the discourse should be delivered extempore. Here I differ with you, though very probably, at first sight, many of my readers may be of your opinion. For a man to be thoroughly qualified for an extempore Orator, in matters of theology, requires gifts and endowments that fall to the share of but very few." True, and therefore, however certain it is that preaching extempore is the most excellent way for those that are qualified for it, I by no means advise *you* to attempt it, being "well convinced," as you yourself are, "that you would only advance a *Jumble of Crudities*." "You might indeed, you think, (p. 39.) be able to find words enough to keep your tongue in action, but then you fear" (and no doubt you have sufficient reason for it,) "the thoughts would not be worth listening to, *unconnected*, *vague* and *nugatory*." This is granted, Sir, and therefore, for your credit's sake, I trust you will not attempt to utter a sentence in this way, unless you previously commit it to memory. This
you

you might do, and thereby have all the glory of an extempore speaker, without the disgrace of uttering nonsense. Then, Sir, you too might "force people into a belief of your great abilities," and have the pleasure, which you think extempore Preachers have, of hearing yourself "extolled and praised as a very fine man, that can talk better off book, than most Parsons can with their book before them."

In the mean time, Sir, you must comfort yourself with thinking that you have so much "sensitivity in your frame," if not "piety in your soul," that you can preach (you mean *read*) "with *fervency*, the sermon which you have either composed in your closet, or even transcribed from some approved Author." For, for your own part you know yourself capable of delivering a written discourse in a manner that shall both edify your hearers and impress them with principles of devotion to God and love to mankind." So that, notwithstanding the air of gaiety you give yourself p. 6. we must take care how we confound you with

"The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again: pronounce a Text:
Cry, *Hem*, and reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work
And, with a well-bred whisper, close the scene."

Persuaded, therefore, that it would be doing your congregation and the world (for no doubt, you will communicate the knowledge of your art to others) a real injury to use any endeavours to draw you from a practice in which you are so great a proficient, and by which, without troubling God for the aid of supernatural grace, you do him and your fellow creatures such essential

service, I shall forbear adding any more on the subject of *extempore Preaching*, but shall refer those who have not your extraordinary talent at *reading*, and who may be prejudiced in favour of the method practised by *John the Baptist*, by *Jesus Christ*, by his *Apostles*, *Prophets*, *Evangelists*, and the *first Pastors* of the flock of Christ, as well as by the most eminent Ministers of the Word in all nations and ages, almost, except our own, to a little Tract, entitled *Reading no Preaching*, and to a Treatise just published, entitled, *The practice of extempore Preaching recommended, &c.* by a Clergyman of the Church of England. These, Sir, they will find a sufficient answer to *Bishop Bull's Sermon*, which you recommend, and to your own observations on this subject.

And now, Sir, when I have called the attention of your readers to that wonderful ingenuity of yours, whereby "reasoning analogically," (see p. 20.) you deduce (p. 40.) the *cloven foot* of Satan, from the *cloven tongues* of fire, and have discovered, contrary to the plain meaning of my words, that I have asserted, in the 56th page of my Letters, in opposition to my former intimations respecting the depravity of the established Clergy, that "there are not a dozen
" Parishes in all the kingdom where the Church
" Ministers are notoriously wicked," and inculcate "doctrines of a dangerous tendency;" I shall pass on to the 41st page of your Hints, that I may endeavour to remove a part, at least, of the *astonishment* you are there in, "that mankind
" should be so deluded as to follow the Ministry
" of these men who are only *half-ministers*. If
" you are competent, you say, to preach the
" word of God, year after year, certainly you
" must be to administer in the most solemn of-
" fices

"fices of that religion you profess to teach." True, Sir. and what then? Does it follow because we are *competent* for it, that therefore it is *expedient* and *necessary* we should do it? But you ask, "Why do you refuse to convey this means of sanctification to your followers?" Why? Out of respect to you and the rest of the established Clergy, and that we may separate from you as *little as possible*. In other words, as I observed in the very passage which you have last quoted from my Letters, and to which if you had attended, you would not have needed to make this enquiry, "that our Societies may, at all opportunities communicate in the established Church," from which as we do not *dissent*, so we wish to *withdraw* from it no further than is absolutely necessary.

But I don't wonder you should ask such a question, who are so little acquainted with our *doctrine, discipline, plan, and whole æconomy*, as to charge us with the sin of *Schism*, and entitle your book, *Hints to Methodists and other Dissenters*. The Methodists, in general, Sir, whatever they may hereafter become in consequence of the reproach, insults and injuries they receive from some of the Clergy of the established Church, are not, at present, *Dissenters*. They do not dissent from the principle doctrines, nor disapprove of the service of the Church. They would not even licence their Preaching-houses, nor would their Preachers take licences under the *Toleration Act*, were they not compelled to it for their security. They *dissent* only from the corrupt and heterogeneous doctrines brought in, here and there, by many of the Clergy, doctrines unknown to the *Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy* of our Church, and from the ungodly lives of its Members. Hence it is that they do not set up *altar against altar,*

altar, but, in general, have still recourse to the Clergy of the Church of England for the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, not because they judge their own Preachers, who dispense to them the word of God, *incompetent* for these lower offices, but in order that they may not depart from the established Church a step further than is necessary. And, I trust, our people and preachers, in general, unmoved by such ignorant and low abuse as yours, will abide still in the old way ; and regardless what opinion you, and thousands more of the Clergy and Laity may have of us, whether you account us *half-Ministers*, or *no Ministers at all*, will still go steadily on endeavouring to bring lost sinners to God, and to diffuse true and vital godliness through the land.

The Lord, we are well assured, hath not sent us primarily, if at all, to *baptize* : others, who are not called, like us, to go into the *high ways and hedges*, are sufficiently qualified to perform *that office*. And as to the *Lord's Supper*, however divine and solemn an ordinance, and however necessary to be attended by the followers of Christ, yet it cannot, perhaps, be easily shewn from the New Testament that Christ hath made it a *Minister's* absolute duty to *administer it*, (although he hath made it the duty of his people to *receive it*) or that the presence of a Minister is *essentially* necessary at the administration of it. But that a *dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto us*, we know, and *woe be to us if we preach not the Gospel !* For on the knowledge of *this* depends the salvation of mankind, but it does not depend on the ordinances being administered by *this* or *that description of men*. And the Lord hath crowned our endeavours with amazing success, and that in the small space of little more than half a century. You have been constrained, as
we

we have seen, to bear a feeble and scanty testimony, in this your mixture of scurility and abuse, to the good God has done by us. But a Pamphlet published lately at Carlisle by Mr. A. Robinson, a stranger to us, gives in a few words, a much juster account of this matter. After observing, p. 149. that "the ignorance of the lowest orders of the people in religious matters is very notorious in this kingdom, where two millions a year are paid for their instruction," he adds, "The Methodists, have, in the last fifty years instructed more of the lower orders of the people in the obligations of Christianity, and have called more from gross vice to piety and virtue, than the Church has ever done since the Reformation. Yet the Clergy for their services, have been paid during that period, by the state, four hundred Millions, Sterling, while the Methodists, have not cost Government one farthing, but have been treated with insult and contempt by both Bishops and Statesmen. The Methodists seem willing to put the whole on the issue of this enquiry, Is there a future state?"

Yes; we are willing to put the whole on the issue of this enquiry. That there is a future state we are well assured, and therefore (1 Tim. iv. 10) *both to labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. Being reviled (1 Cor. iv. 12.) we bless, being persecuted we suffer it, being defamed we intreat, and though made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things unto this day, we take it patiently, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God, and that he is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love, which he inclines and enables us to shew towards his name.*

We

We are only ashamed that we do and suffer *so little* ; and purpose, through divine grace, to give still greater diligence, to save our own souls, and those that hear us, desiring to be *stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

I remain, Rev. Sir,

Your Friend and Servant in Christ,

JOSEPH BENSON.

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